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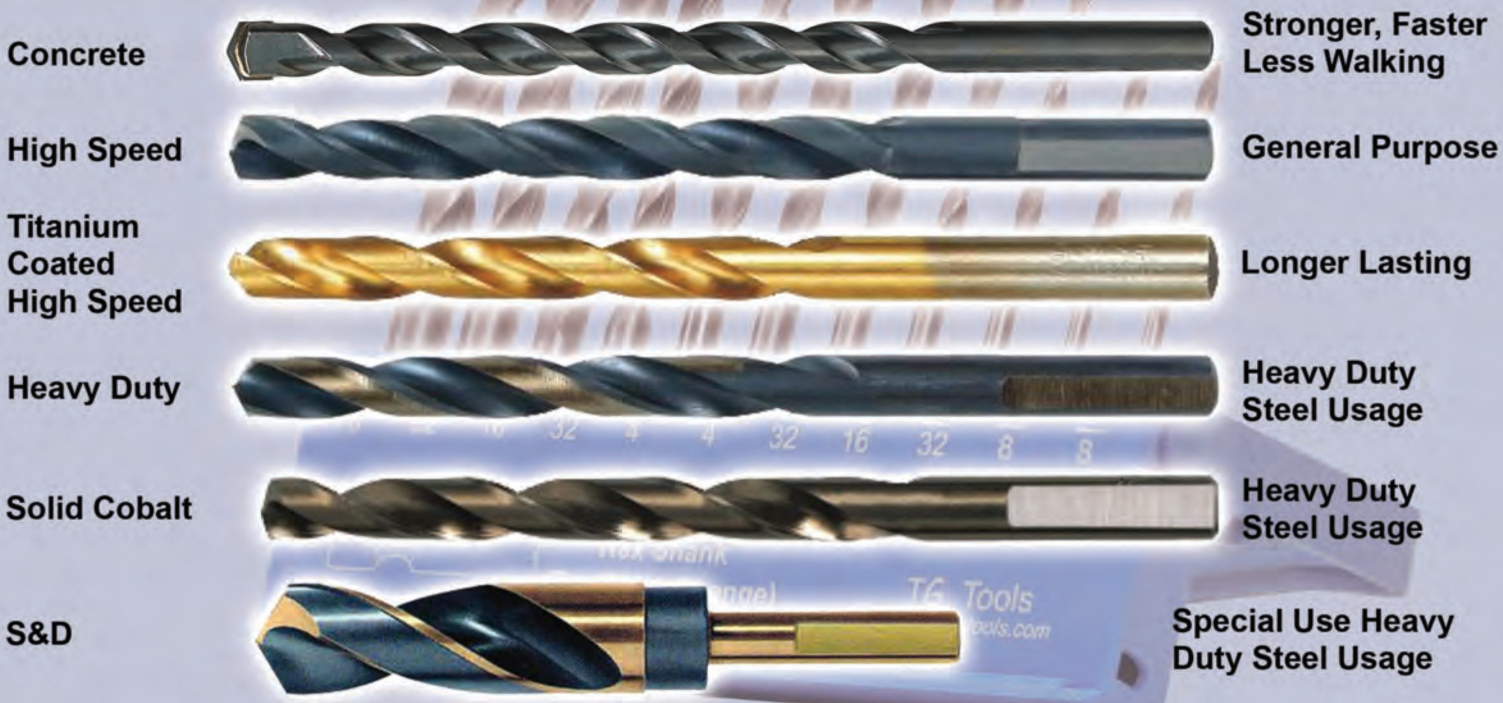
135° Split Point start from Contact
3-flat shank, less chuck slippage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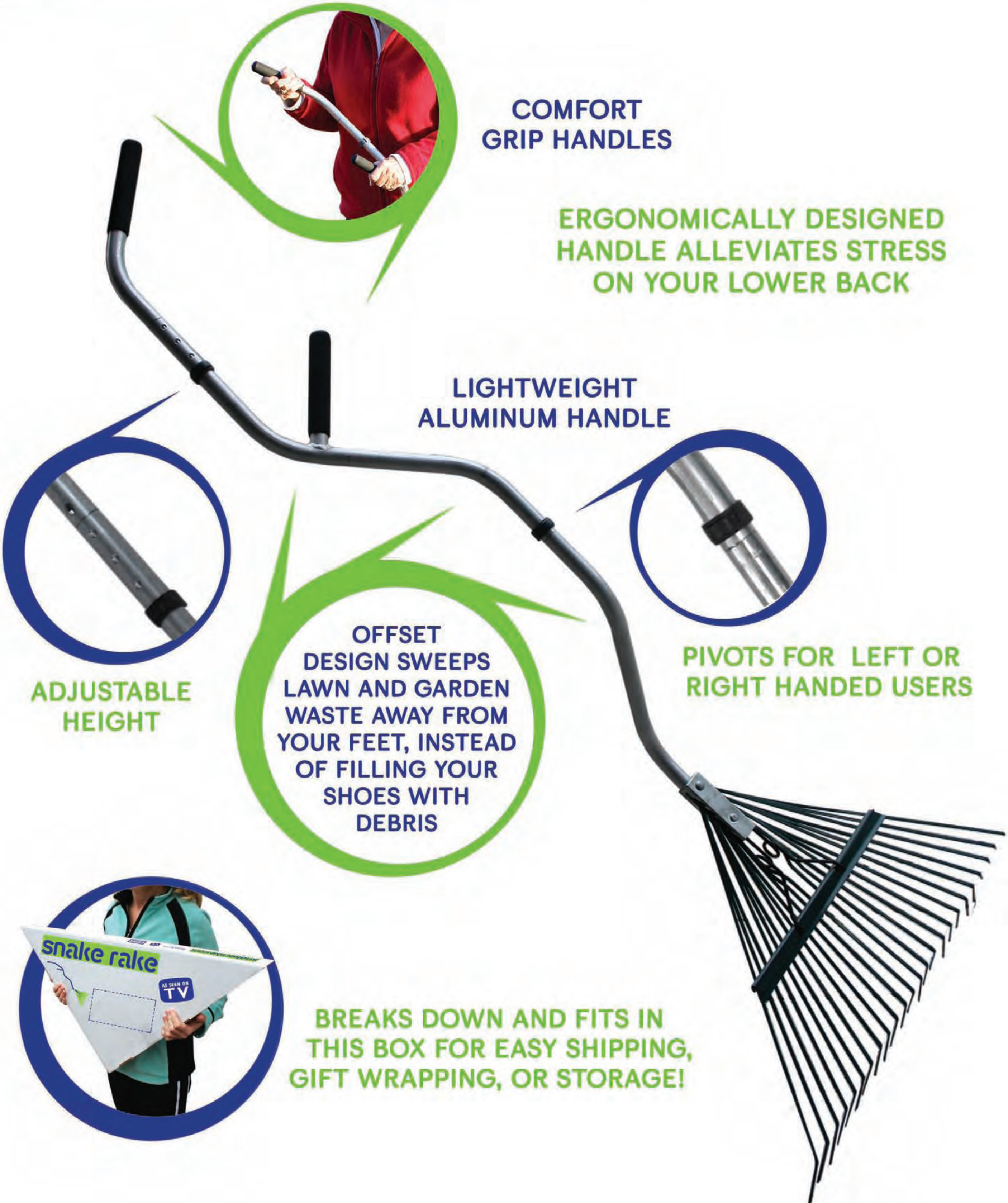

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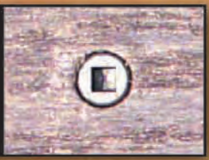

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Q: *How do I repair a deck joist that is starting to rot?*

A: The easiest way is to repair a joist is to install a sister joist to strengthen the damaged area. Use a hammer and chisel to chip away the damaged wood. Liberally apply two coats of waterproof sealer over the damaged joist. Cut a reinforcing sister joist from lumber that is the same dimension as the damaged joist. Treat all sides of the new joist with the sealer, and face-nail it flush over the old joist with 10d nails or screws every 2 feet. Toe-nail the ends of the sister joist to the ledger and rim joist.

……

Q: *We have a flagstone patio with the stones mortared in place. The mortar is crumbling, leaving the stones loose and making a couple of steps particularly dangerous. To repair this, do I need to remove the stones and start all over?*

A: Stone patios are often built on a flexible base of crushed rock and sand to avoid the problem of deteriorating mortar. But with features such as steps, a rigid, mortared base is the only way to build. The problem is that the water in the mortar mix causes the concrete to shrink as it cures. Particularly in colder climates up north, the freeze/thaw cycles will cause the concrete to expand, which creates voids between the pavers and eventually leads to crumbling mortar. To fix this, first use a hammer and small chisel and chip away the old, loose mortar. Sweep the joints clean. Next, mix a batch of mortar consisting of three parts Portland cement and five parts sand. Use only enough water to make a semi-dry mix; it should not slosh around like regular cement. Trowel the mortar between the pavers and tamp down the pavers and mortar using a mallet and blocks of wood.

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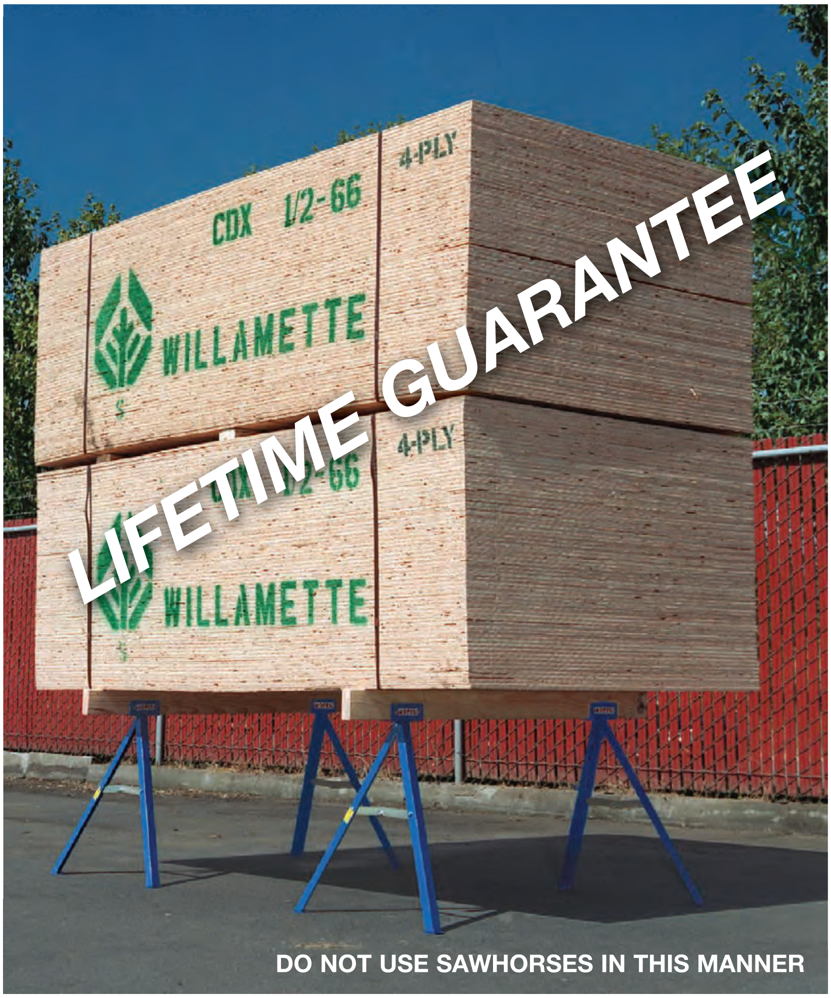

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Q: *I'm planning to build a deck on the back of my house. I want to put a ledger board along the rear wall, but there is a chimney sticking out of the wall that will interfere with the ledger. How do I frame around the chimney?*

A: Much like framing around a door or window in a wall, you'll need to install a header where the ledger will break. First, install the two sections of ledger board that bookend the chimney chase. When you install the joists on the ledger, you'll need to double the two joists that frame each side of the chimney chase. Then, install the doubled header between the two doubled joists. The header can span a maximum of 6 feet. The header is made by face-nailing together two 2-by pieces of lumber the same dimension as the deck joists. Install the header with the appropriate metal hangers flush between the doubled joists and oriented vertically, just like the joists and ledger board. Then, install the joists located at the chimney chase so they terminate against the header, just as they would have with a ledger board.

……

Q: *Is it possible to smooth out the relief on textured interior walls?*

A: You have three options. The first is to sand the texture from the wall with a pole sander. It may help to rent a dustless drywall sander that vacuums up the dust. The second method is to cover the walls with thin drywall panels, and to finish the joints just as you would with any other drywall installation. The third method is to fill in the texture with drywall compound. To do this, lightly sand the wall with 120-grit sandpaper to knock down high spots. Dust or vacuum the walls. Spot-seal any damaged areas with an oil-based primer. Thin some premixed joint compound with water using a drill and drywall auger. Mix to the consistency of cake icing. Use a 10-inch drywall knife to apply the compound in 4-foot sections using broad, overlapping strokes and feathering the edges. Allow the mud to dry overnight. Lightly sand, and then apply another thin coat. Finish-sand the wall and apply a coat of primer before painting.

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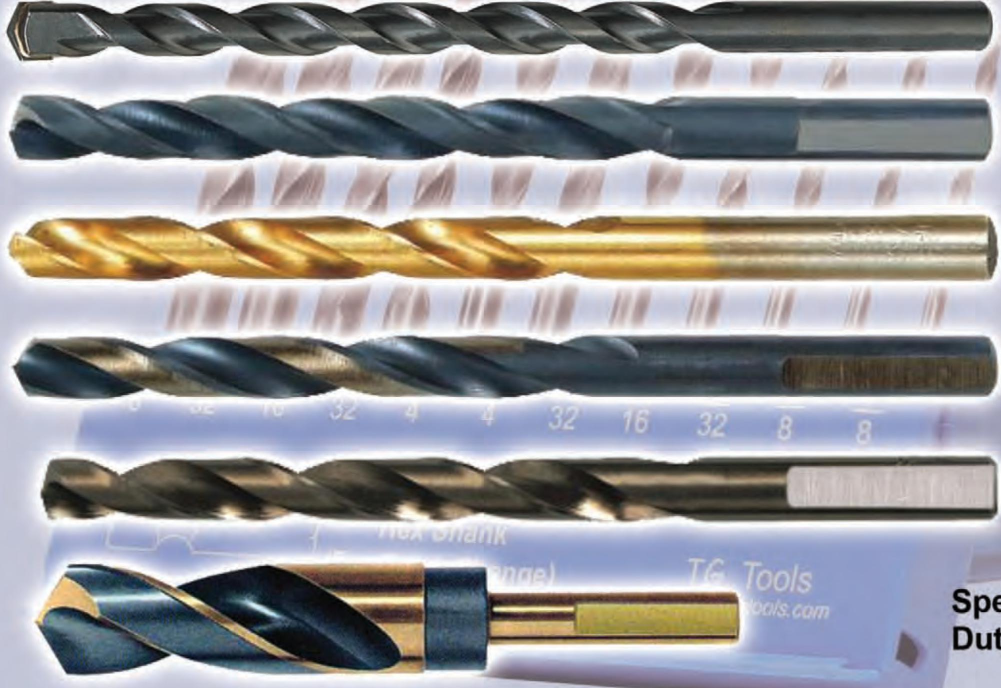

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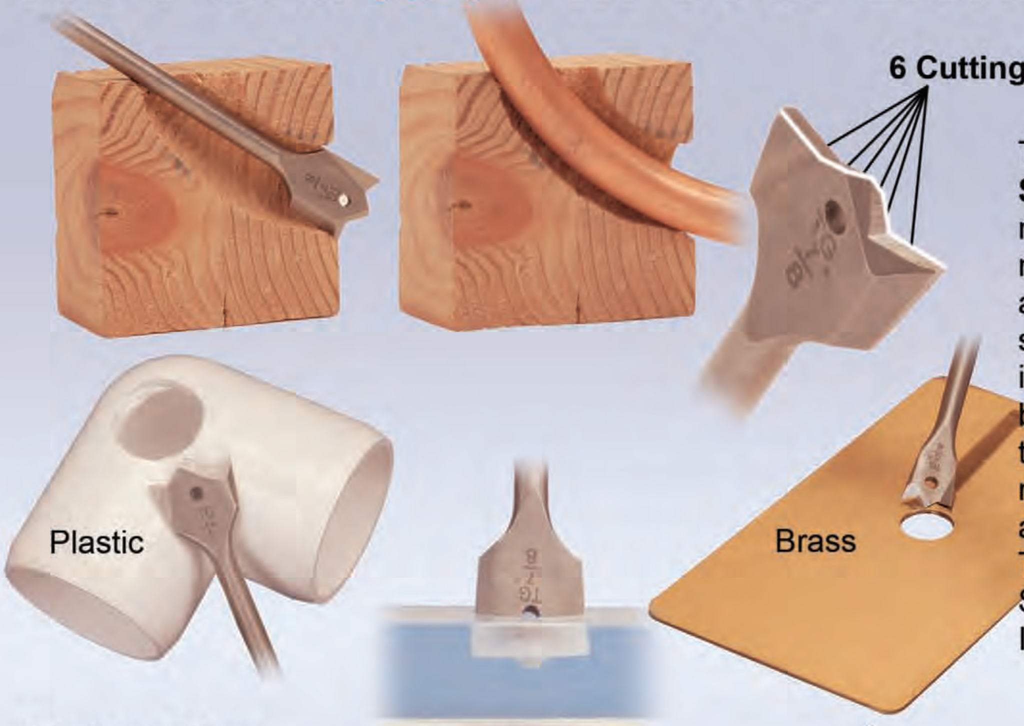

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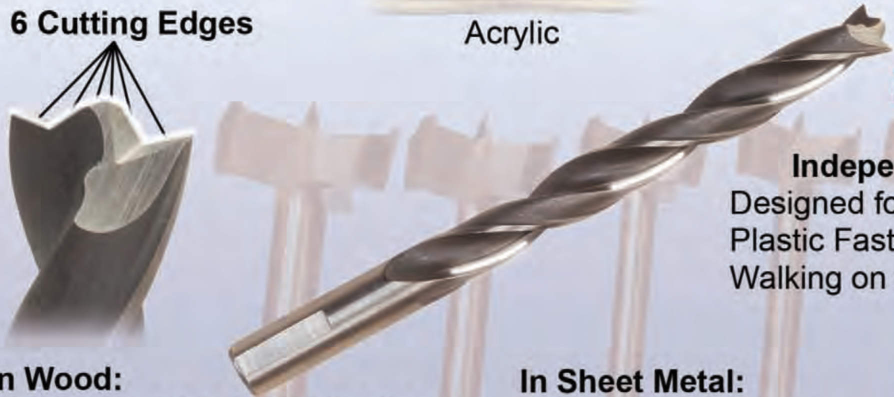

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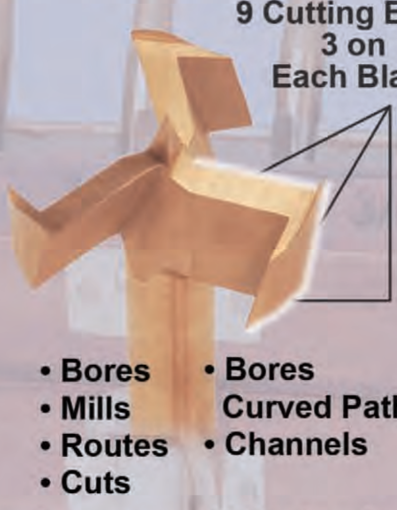

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Hardware Show Review

For tradesmen, contractors, DIY'ers or anyone who likes to be the first on the block with the coolest new tools—the National Hardware Show (NHS) is the place to be. From new framing hammers and flashlights to the latest advancements in ShamWow technology, you'll find it here. Held this year in Las Vegas, Nevada, the NHS is a product showcase where hundreds of tools, gadgets and other home-improvement items are rolled out to the public. It's actually a trade show targeted to retailers who distribute the products on display, but that's incidental to guys like me that don't own a hardware store. We're in it for the gadgets.

The following is a roundup of the latest innovations that our staff thought might interest our readers, in case you couldn't make it to Vegas.

SLIDE-N-PUMP

A simple but effective design is all that's required for the new Slide-N-Pump, an easy-to-use device to manually move water from place to place with no mess. Just attach a standard garden hose to both ends, insert the open hose-end into any volume of water (or other liquids) and pump it away. The Slide-N-Pump also acts as a siphon initiator to create a continuous flow of water. At one-third the price of electrical pumps, the versatile Slide-N-Pump makes it easy to pump or siphon water anywhere, without the need to use electricity near water. Use it to drain aquariums, hot tubs, post holes, utility meters, toilets, basements, foundations, clogged gutters and more.

QUICKLOADER TIE-DOWN RATCHET

If you find tie-down ratchets frustrating—and at times, nearly impossible—to use, then check out the Quickloader from Wessel Industries. The Quickloader is the first retractable tie-down ratchet that retains all the benefits of the traditional two-piece design combined with a spring-loaded mechanism to automatically roll up the strap. Compared to two-piece ratchets, the Quickloader is easier to use, reduces time spent loading and unloading, and is designed for a longer life cycle, because the retracted strap protects the webbing from dirt and debris. Simply attach the hooks on each side of the cargo then ratchet the handle to fasten it down. To release, move the handle 180 degrees forward. Then, retract the strap for orderly storage without tangles, twists and knots. Learn more at www.quickloader.com.

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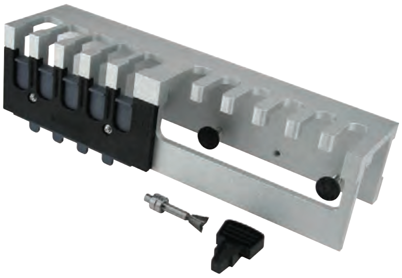
RESCUE TAPE

Attention DIY'ers and Tradesmen: You need some Rescue Tape. Rescue Tape is a self-fusing silicone repair product that was originally used by the U.S. Military. Using no adhesive, this versatile tape-like product is easy to use on all sorts of jobs from plumbing to tool repair. You can quickly fix leaks on hoses, insulate electrical wiring, wrap damaged tool handles and more. The *EHT* staff has used Rescue Tape to install drain pipes, to help repair patio furniture, and to seal an air compressor hose to an HVAC drain hose (so we could blast clean the clogged drain hose). The possibilities are endless. Simply pull the tape tightly and wrap back onto itself to create a strong, self-fusing connection. According to the manufacturer, Rescue Tape boasts a 950-PSI tensile strength, insulates 8,000 volts per layer and withstands 500 degrees of heat. It also remains flexible to -85 degrees. Visit www.rescuetape.com.

E-ZPRO DOVETAIL JIG

Traditionally, creating a professional-quality dovetail joint required considerable carpentry skill, a steady hand, and precision tools or expensive equipment. Most manufactured dovetail jigs were large, costly and complex machines. In response, the all-new E-Zpro DOVEtailer Dovetail & Box Joint Jig from General Tools & Instruments



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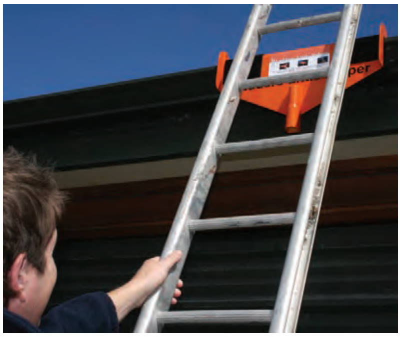
makes precision joinery a possibility for anyone who owns a router or router table. The new jig is set up to make perfect joints right out of the box, requiring no other parts or equipment. The jig is machined from a heavy-duty aluminum extrusion and features a sliding depth gauge that easily adjusts for routing both full and half-blind joints to the dimensions your work requires.

Face-joints or box joints are just as easy to accomplish. Cut both pins and tails for dovetail or box joints in two quick passes with a router or router table. The DOVEtailer can be quickly repositioned to make continuous joints of any length using its provided alignment key. Each kit is available at The Home Depot for $39.97 and includes the dovetail jig, alignment key, a 14-degree 1/4-inch-shank dovetail router bit and two guide bearings. Visit www.generaltools.com.

LADDER'S LITTLE HELPER

Chores like gutter cleaning, window washing, house painting and roof repairs require working on a ladder, which are notorious for accidental falls. The new device called Ladder's Little Helper uses patented technology to help reduce the risk of fall from a ladder. Ladder's Little Helper wraps around the lip of a gutter to provide a stable base to lean a ladder against. Rippled rubber on the underside and face of the device provides grip on both the gutter and ladder, while the raised sides prevent sideways movement. Its patented design fits 99 percent of gutters and ladders and is made of lightweight plastic. To use, simply insert a pole into the bottom, place Ladder's Little Helper on your gutter and lean your ladder against the device for a safer work environment. For more information, visit www.ladderslittlehelper.com.



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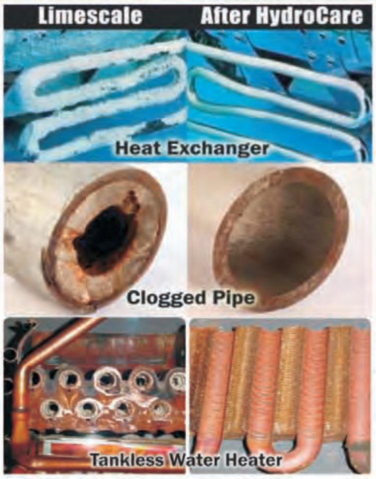

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The Batelle Report:

Commissioned by the Water Quality Association to study the impact of limescale

Some of their findings:

1. Efficiency loss in water heaters - 24%
2. Tankless water heaters operating in hard water failed after 19 days of testing
3. Showerheads lost 75% of flow rate in 18 months
4. Appliances breakdown and require more repairs

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UGL now offers Designer Drylok, a decorative waterproofer formulated with an advanced color system that imparts a granite-like filler system with multicolored specks, providing an economical alternative to solid color. Until now, waterproofers have been a utilitarian paint, used to keep water from entering masonry. Now, customers have the ability to keep water out and create an up-to-date specked finish to add a decorative look. Latex-based Designer Drylok comes with a 10-year fully transferable warranty and is ideal for masonry walls, cinder and concrete blocks, stucco, brick, fieldstone foundations and retaining walls. The product is available in two introductory colors; Misty Gray with Midnight Specks, and Natural Sand with Brownstone Specks. Learn more at www.ugl.com.

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STUCKON TOOLS MAGNETIC BOARDS

StuckOn Tools presents a unique concept for storage and access to valuable tools, instruments and shop supplies. The new magnetic boards from StuckOn Tools provide a tool-organization system without the need for pegs, tool boxes or old coffee cans. The durable, rust-resistant steel boards feature a

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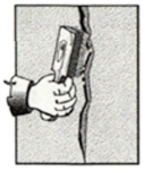

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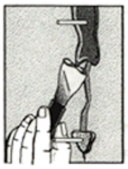

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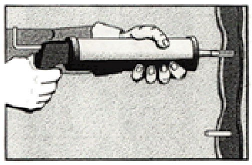

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powder-coated finish and clean up quickly with a simple wipe of the surface. In addition to boards for general hand tools, StuckOn Tools also offers a Garden Board, a Woman's Board (Designer Set), and even a Large Tool Organizer Strip for items such as rakes and shovels. Visit www.stuckontools.com

HEATTRAK SAFETY MATS

HeatTrak safety mats are electrically heated mats designed to melt snow and ice on residential walkways and stairs. The Heated Outdoor Walkway Mat and Heated Outdoor Safety Treads are made of durable material and lie on top of existing surfaces to melt snow at a rate of two inches per hour. The mats are designed to be left outside for the entire winter season. The heated outdoor safety mats reduce slip-and-fall accidents due to snow and ice on outdoor surfaces by keeping them clear and safe, providing a convenient alternative to shoveling or the use of calcium chloride. The Heated Outdoor Walkway Mat measures 20-by-60 inches, and the Heated Outdoor Safety Treads measure 10-by-30 inches. Both products come with their own watertight connector cables, enabling them to connect to additional mats to cover larger areas. A homeowner can connect a maximum of five walkway mats or up to 12 safety treads on a single power plug. Both the walkway mat and safety treads are charcoal gray and surfaced with waterproof ribbed carpeting. The walkway mat retails for $200, and the safety treads are sold in sets of three, each set retailing for $200. HeatTrak offers a two-year manufacturer's warranty on all products, which are now available at Costco.com, Homedepot.com, and the company's online store at www.heattrak.com.

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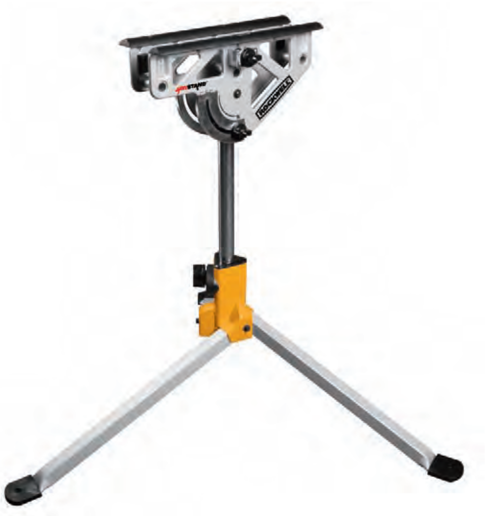
ROCKWELL JAWSTAND

The *EHT* staff looks forward to the launch of the new Rockwell JawStand, which isn't yet on the market, but we got a close-up peek at a prototype during the NHS. An outfeed support roller is a nice extra set of hands on the worksite, but too many roller supports are poorly engineered with a top-heavy design that tends to topple over, or have a roller that sticks and falls over when a board is pushed onto it. The new Rockwell JawStand is designed to address both problems. It features a heavy-duty, tripod-shaped base for extra stability while supporting loads up to 220 pounds. And, in lieu of a roller, the JawStand uses two low-friction slides. These slides allow material to pass over them freely, and unlike rollers, the slides keep the workpiece from drifting. The JawStand can also clamp work pieces up to 1-1/4 inch thick. Featuring a built-in bubble level, the stand can pivot from zero to 90 degrees, and swivel 360 degrees to assist with door installations and other vertical applications. Plus, the height of the support surface is adjustable from 25 to 41 inches, with a scale on the support column that indicates the working height. Use it to raise bath or utility cabinets for mounting, clamp work pieces for sanding and painting and more. The Rockwell JawStand is expected to be available in July at rockwelltoolsdirect.com and Amazon.com.



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IT'S TIME TO RETHINK THE GARAGE.®

ALLIGATORBOARD

For those serious DIY'ers and tradesmen who think a fiberboard pegboard simply won't cut it, there's AlligatorBoard. Manufactured from 20-gauge steel, AlligatorBoard pegboard is much stronger and more durable than ordinary pegboard; it won't warp, tear, discolor or rust. It features strength-reinforcing dimpled holes, and with the included hardware it's easier to install than other pegboards. There's no need to add framing—the built-in 5/8-inch flanges let you mount directly to any wall. AlligatorBoard holds up to 90 pounds when mounted on wall studs and comes with a 5-year warranty. A variety of panel and strip sizes are available, and the open corners make it easy to run speaker wire or extension cords behind the installed panels.

SPEED DROPS

This is the first advancement in drop cloths since—well, the invention of drop cloths. Speed Drops use semi-rigid panels with straight edges that unfold flat in accordion style when you drop them to the floor. This design eliminates bunching and twisting, and its low profile lays beneath the swing of a door without posing an obstruction. There's no need to bend down to situate its position. Just kick the Speed Drop in place against the wall, and the straight edges create an instant barrier with maximum coverage protection. When finished painting, just fold it back up to transport or store it. In addition to the Floor Drop, also available is a large Area Drop for use when painting ceilings, a Stair Drop designed with semi-rigid panels that fold easily over treads and risers, a Door Drop that fits around jambs, as well as a Toilet Drop and Ladder Sneakers to prevent scratching the floor. For more information, visit www.speeddrops.com.

PAINTSMART TRAYZ

PaintSmart-Trayz puts a clever spin on a roller tray, giving it a mounting hook for use atop a ladder. What we like about the design is its vertical orientation, which makes it easy to rake excess paint off the roller. In fact, the steep pitch of the PaintSmart-Tray makes wiping off excess paint even easier than with standard trays because the excess paint drains to the reservoir at the bottom. PaintSmart-Trayz also have clips for two brushes and a 9-inch roller. It's made of sturdy plastic, holds two quarts of paint and is backed by a lifetime warranty. PaintSmart Trayz also feature an easy-to-carry handle and a drain spout to collect and save unused paint with minimal mess. Visit www.PaintSmart-Trayz.com.

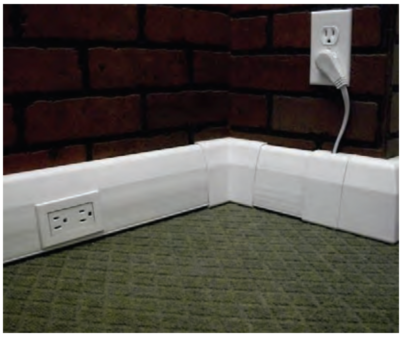
HYLOFT EXPRESS

For quick and simple overhead storage space that's easy on the wallet, Diamond Storage Concepts now offers a new, easy-to-install, smaller ceiling storage unit. The HyLoft Express is a compact and affordable option, measuring 27-by-36 inches with adjustable height from 16 to 24

inches and a weight capacity of 150 pounds. For homeowners who purchase items in bulk that end up clogging the pantry or stacked on the garage floor, the HyLoft Express provides an economical means of getting that stuff out of the way. Plus, the narrow width makes it easy to fit in a small walk-in closet. Retailers are expected to price the unit at $34.95. All HyLoft ceiling-mounted shelves, hooks and racks have a powder-coated finish and are designed for do-it-yourself installation. Visit www.hyloft.com.

ELECTRA-BASE

Power extension with a sense of style—that's what you get with Electra-Base, a new electrical solution that combines an attractive, modular baseboard with household wiring. Electra-Base allows for the addition of electrical outlets throughout a room without the need for a licensed electrician. Electra-Base is an easy-to-install product that fills the needs of those living in older homes with limited electrical outlets. No longer will out-of-the-way outlets go unused. No longer will it be necessary to string unsightly extension cords across the floor, walls or ceiling to access those outlets. Simply measure your space and cut the modular, hollow Electra-Base baseboard to fit. Peel off the adhesive backing and install against the wall. Place the outlet cord in the Electra-Base, add the trim pieces and it's ready for use. Learn more at www.electra-base.com.



RAPID WARRIOR MULTI-KNIFE

The Rapid Warrior multi-use utility knife tackles much more than general razor-blade applications. The Warrior from Rapid Tools is the only tool that converts from a standard utility knife to a variety of utility saws. Attach a hacksaw blade to cut off nails or screw heads. Attach a drywall blade to cut out an outlet box. With a general purpose

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RAPID WARRIOR

blade, the Warrior can trim tree branches or cut heavy rope. It does the job of several tools without taking up much room in the toolbox, and its compact size permits work in confined spaces. When the rough work is done, switch back to a razor blade for the fine cleanup. The Warrior Value Pack includes a variety of blades, and the tool also accepts the standard reciprocating saw blades on the market today. Learn more at www.rapidtools.net.

CANGUN1

SafeWorld Int'l. brings us the CanGun1 premium spray can tool that features the world's first FullGrip trigger with a 2.5:1 leverage advantage. The CanGun1 makes spraying the contents of virtually all standard spray cans of paint, lubricant, adhesives, etc. up to eight times easier, while providing professional results every time. This patented pistol-grip accessory easily snaps onto standard aerosol spray cans, transforming them into professional-style spray guns with unprecedented control, for hours of effortless, pain-free spraying. CanGun1's exclusive Ergonomist-tested and arthritis-friendly design also makes it suitable for use while wearing gloves. The reusable CanGun1 is made in the USA with 80-percent recycled, non-toxic plastic and zero-waste, space-optimized, recyclable packaging. For more information, visit www.cangun1.com. **EHT**

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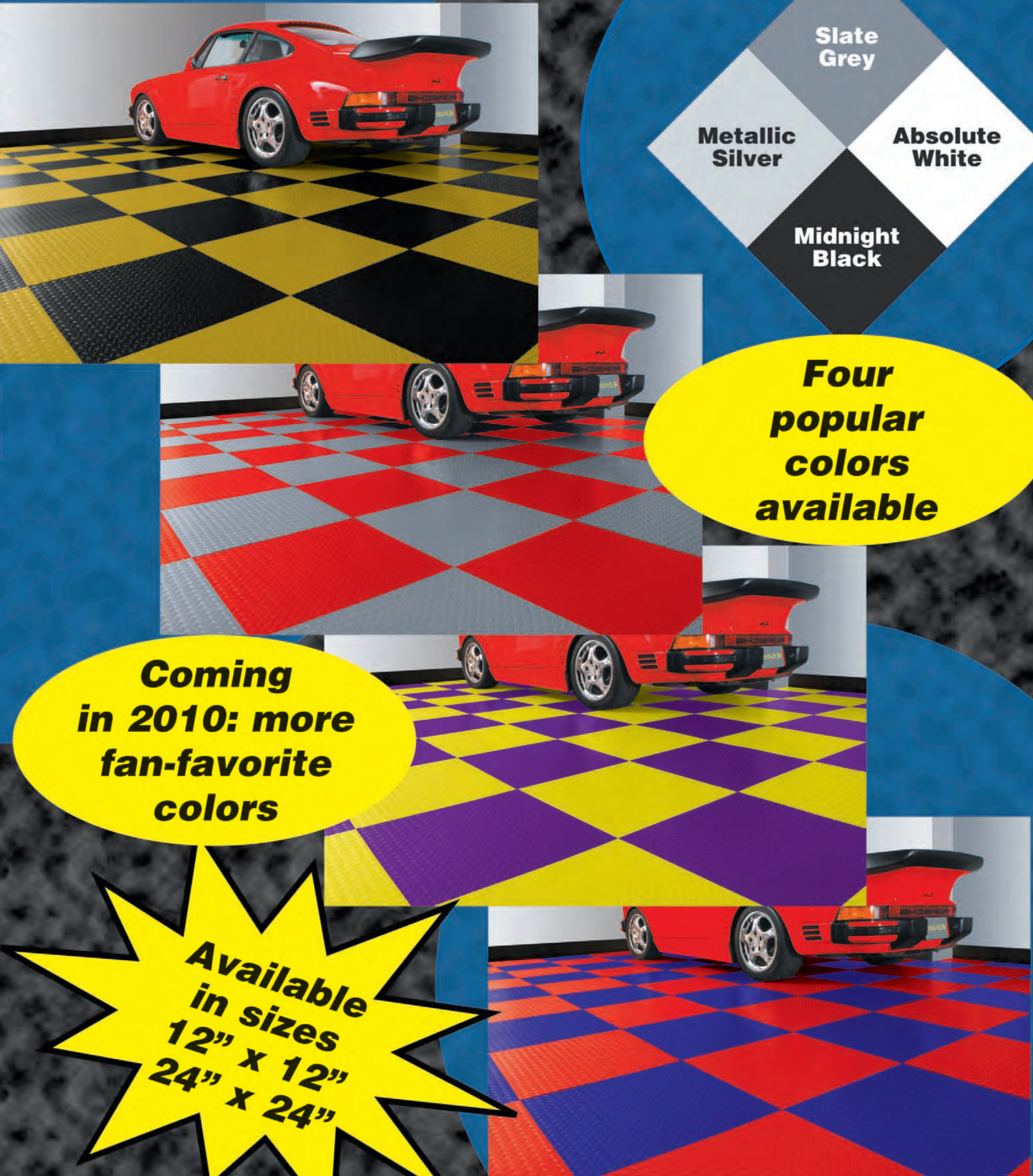

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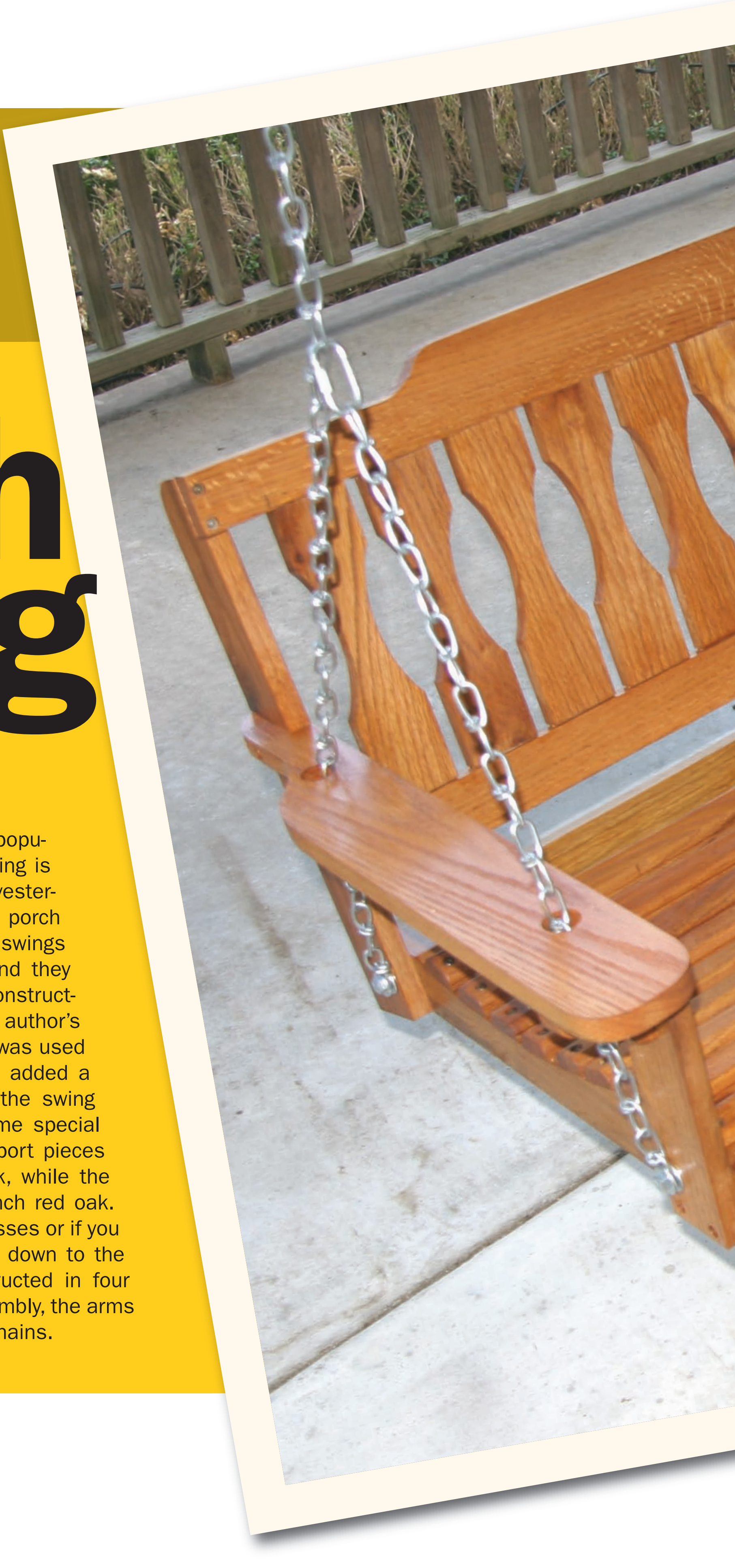
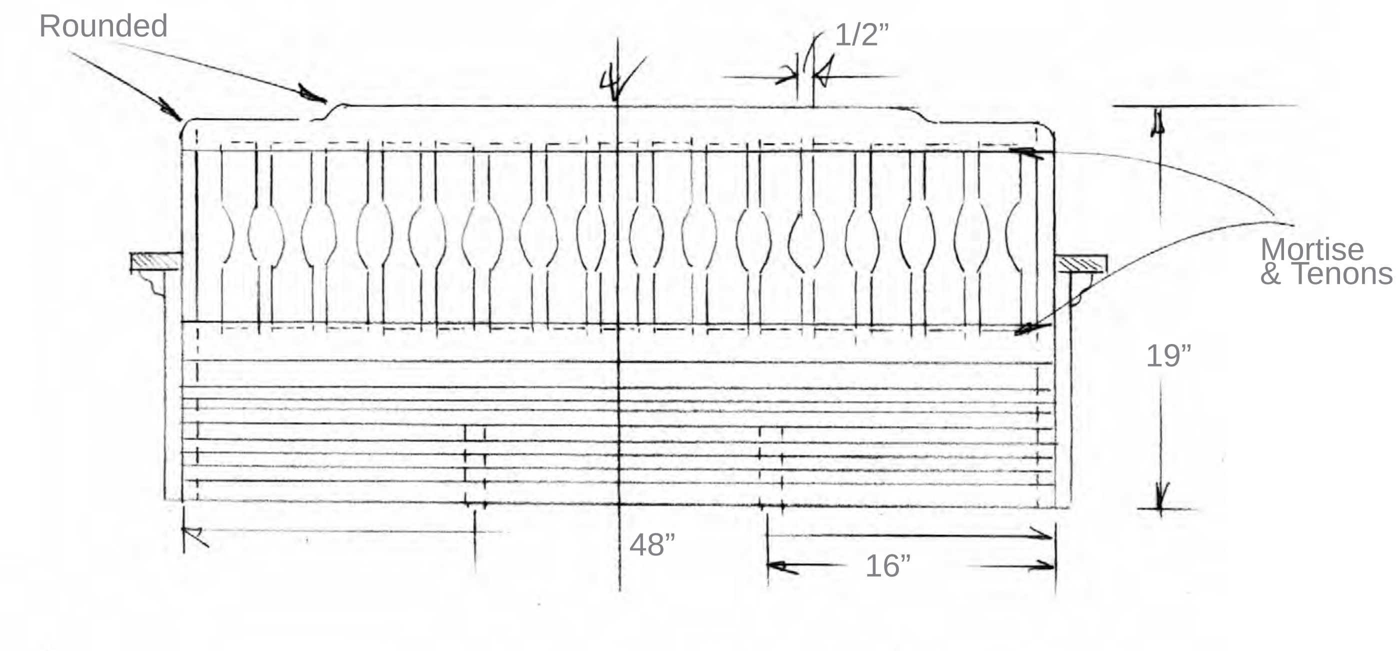
Relax in style with a classic bench swing

Build a Porch Swing

By Monte Burch

Porches have become increasingly popular, and an old-fashioned porch swing is reminiscent of the romance of yesteryear. You can build your own “classic” porch swing and match it to your décor. Porch swings are often exposed to some weather and they must be sturdy. The swing shown was constructed of red oak, cut and dried from the author’s farm. Sikkens Cetol SRD in Cedar Tone was used to provide weather protection and also added a “golden glow” to the swing. Although the swing shown looks fairly easy, it requires some special tools and skill to build. The swing support pieces are all cut from 3/4-inch solid red oak, while the back slats and seat slats are of 1/2-inch red oak. You can purchase wood in these thicknesses or if you have a planer, you can plane materials down to the correct thickness. The swing is constructed in four steps: the seat assembly, the back assembly, the arms assemblies and installing the support chains.





SEAT ASSEMBLY

First step is to enlarge the squared drawings found throughout this article for the seat supports, back slats, top back support, arm supports and arms. Create patterns of cardboard from the drawings. Incidentally, you may get requests to make additional swings, so it’s a good idea to keep patterns of the various pieces. One-half inch wood or 1/4-inch hardboard can be used to create the patterns for future use.

Rip the pieces to the correct widths, plane both edges, then cut to shape using a bandsaw. Sand all rounded edges using a spindle sander, drum sander or the rounded edge of a combination belt and disc sander. Rip the rear and front seat support boards. Note the front seat support board has an angled edge (pg. 38). Rip this on a table saw to create the proper angle. Rip the 1/2-inch seat slats to correct width and then run their edges over a router table and round-over bit to lightly round the sharp edges.

Lay the seat supports on a smooth, flat surface in their correct locations. The entire assembly is fastened together with Kreg Stainless Steel Maxi Loc coarse washer-head, self-tapping screws in counterbored holes. Determine the location of the holes in the

As the swing utilizes two different thicknesses of material, first step is to plane to the correct thickness, then rip the various pieces to the correct widths and joint all edges.

Enlarge the squared drawings to create patterns, then cut the pieces such as the seat supports on a bandsaw.

A drum or spindle sander is used to sand all curved surfaces.

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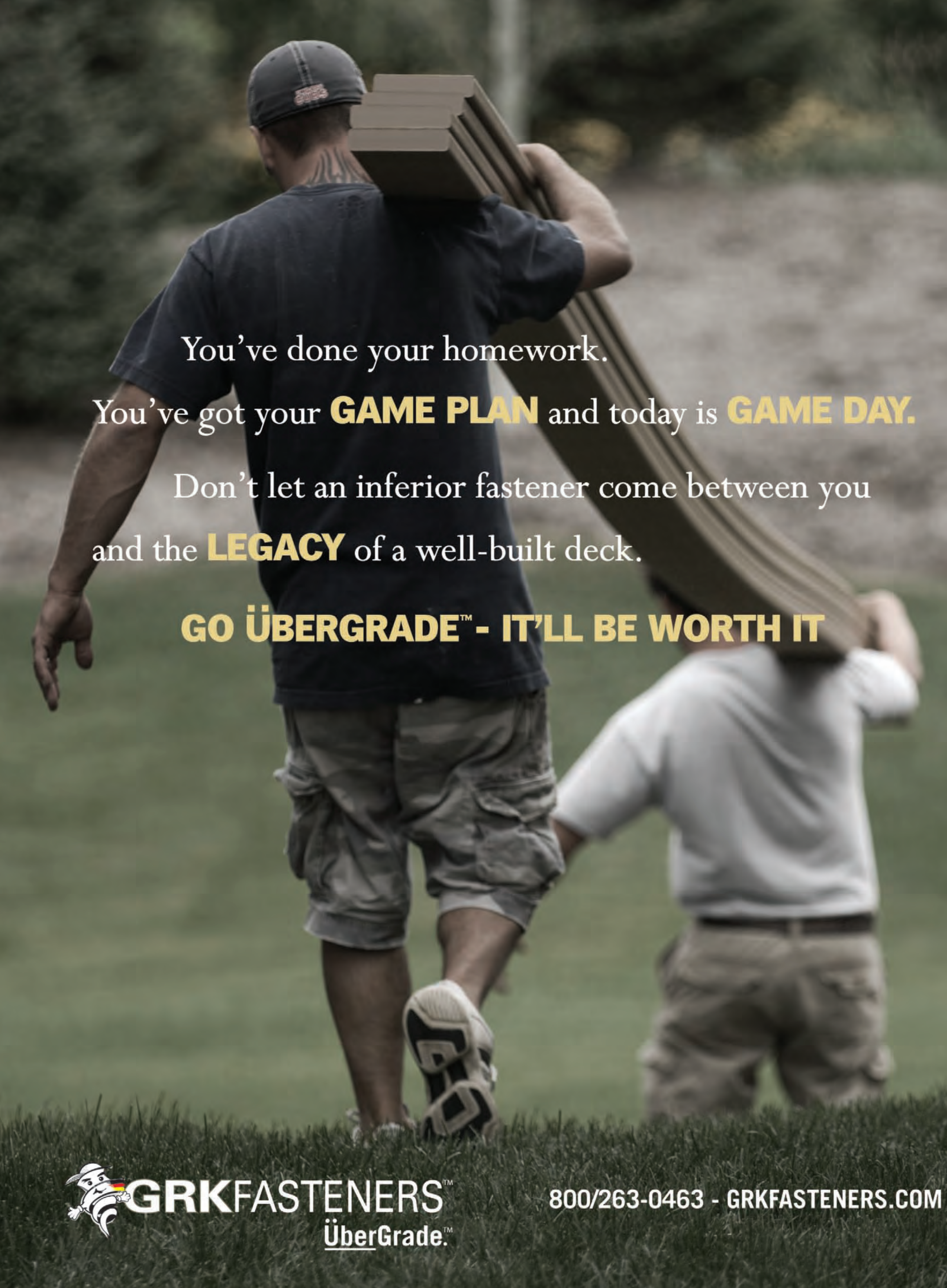
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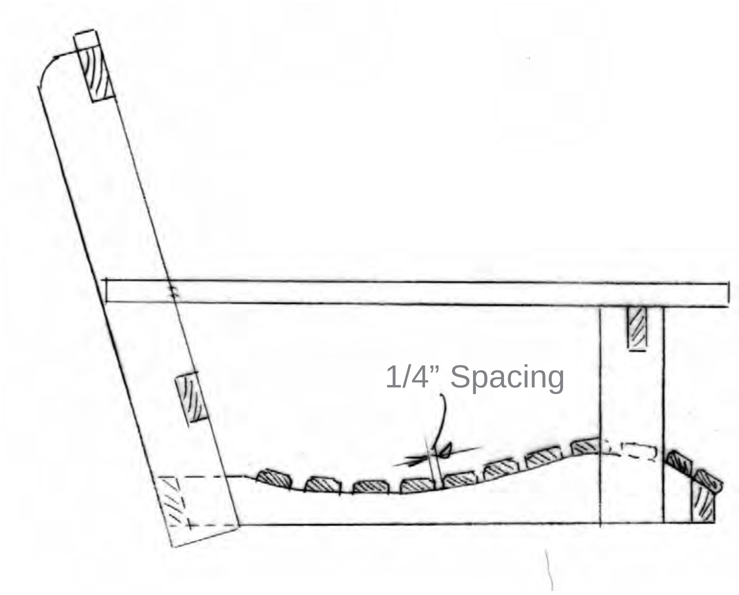
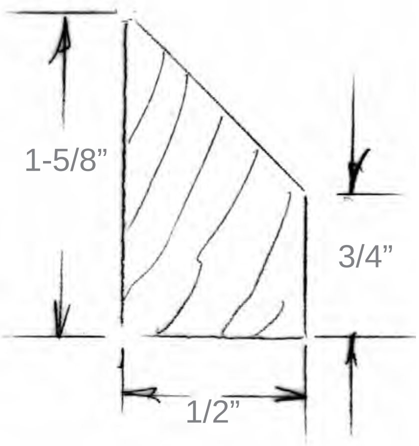


Front Seat Support Board



ends of the front and rear seat support boards. Counterbore the holes using a portable electric drill and counterbore bit, or a drill press and a 3/8-inch forstner bit, to create the hole for the screw head. Finish by boring through the boards and slightly into the seat supports with a 1/8-inch drill bit. All joints must be predrilled to prevent the oak from splitting.

Fasten the front and rear seat boards to the end and center seat supports through the predrilled and counterbored holes. Make sure the assembly is square. Counterbore and pre-drill the holes in the top of the slats and down into the seat boards. Anchor the slats in place with the screws, setting them slightly below the wood surface. When all slats are installed, lightly sand to remove any wood chips or roughness on the slats and the ends. At this point you may wish to finish the seat portion by applying the Sikkens with a soft-bristle brush, making sure to wipe away any runs.

BACK ASSEMBLY

While the seat assembly finish is drying, assemble the back. Cut the back slats from 1/2-inch oak and, using a bandsaw, cut their profiles. Sand the profiles using a belt sander, sanding drum or spindle sander.

The ends of the slats have tenons cut in them. This can be done using a table saw with a

The entire swing is assembled using Kreg Stainless Steel screws in counterbored and predrilled holes.

MATERIALS LIST

- **Seat Supports, 3/4 x 2-5/8 x 19-3/4", 4**
- **Front Seat Support, 3/4 x 1/2 x 48", 1**
- **Rear Seat Support, 3/4 x 2 x 48", 1**
- **Seat Slats, 1/2 x 1-3/8 x 48", 11**
- **Top back support, 3/4 x 3 x 49-1/2", 1**
- **Bottom back support, 3/4 x 2 x 49-1/2", 1**
- **Back uprights, 3/4 x 2-1/2 x 18-1/4", 2**
- **Back slats, 1/2 x 2-1/2 x 10-3/4", 15**
- **Back braces, 3/4 x 1 x 12-3/4", 2**
- **Front arm supports, 3/4 x 2 x 2-1/2", 2**
- **Arms, 3/4 x 3-1/2 x 22-3/8", 2**
- **Front uprights, 3/4 x 2-1/2 x 8-7/8", 2**
- **Heavy-duty, twisted-link chain, 17'**
- **Screw chain links, 2**
- **Bolts and lock nuts, 6-3/16 x 2-1/2", 4**
- **Washers, 12**
- **Screws, 82**

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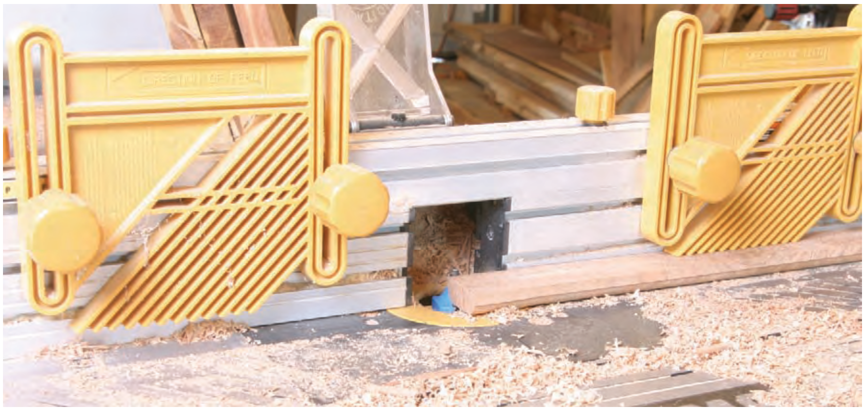


The seat slats have their top edges rounded using a round-over bit in a router table.

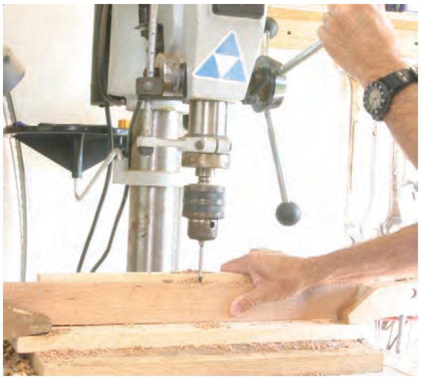
tenon cutter or dado head. You can also cut these quite simply with a radial arm saw and dado head, such as the Freud model. Simply position a 1/2-inch stop block to hold the slats against.

The simplest way to do most of the counterboring is with a forstner bit in a drill press.

Anchor the stop-block to the radial arm saw table with a clamp. Hold the slat in place and run the dado across each face on each end. Lightly sand the cut ends to remove any splinters. With 15 slats needed, it's not a bad idea to do each step on each slat, and then move to the next step.

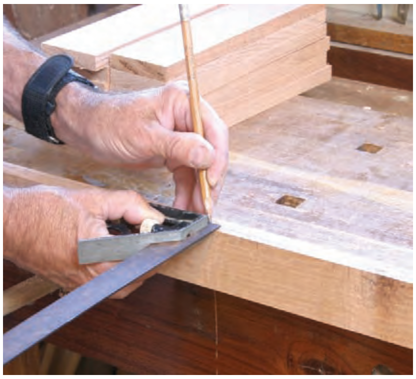
The slat tenons in the porch swing fit into mortises cut in the upper and lower back supports. This takes a bit of work and some fairly precise cutting. A simpler method would be to run a dado on the top edge of the bottom back support and the bottom edge of the upper back support. Then cut the slats so they completely fill the dadoes without any spacing between. My original design was this, and then I decided the back needed a more open appearance so I went with the more difficult method.

The mortises can be cut in a number of ways, but remember there are 30 mortises to cut. A mortising machine makes the chore simple. You can even hand-cut the mortises with sharp chisels and a mallet. I used a 1/4-inch forstner bit in a drill press to rough cut the mortises, stopping the bit to create a 1/2-inch deep mortise. I used a hand-made fence clamped to the drill press table to hold the boards in the correct position for cutting the mortises. Regardless of the method used, make sure to lay-out the mortises with a sharp pencil on both the upper and

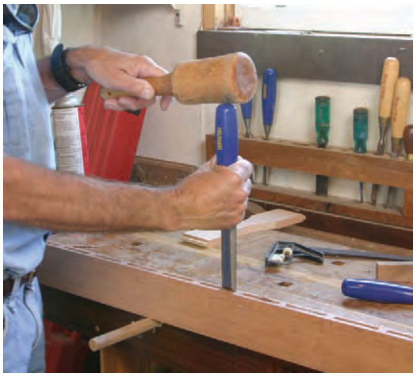


Rough cut the mortises with a forstner bit and a shop-made fence on a drill press.

Construct the seat assembly first and make sure it is square.



The back slats are held in place with mortise and tenon joints. Lay out the mortise joints.



True-up the mortise ends and edges with a sharp bevel chisel and mallet.

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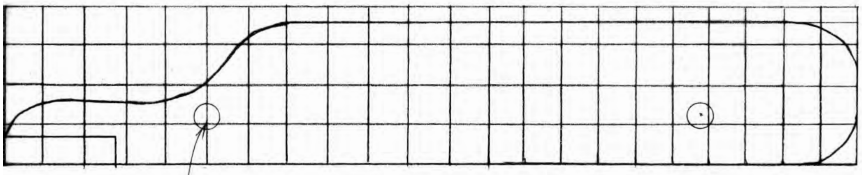
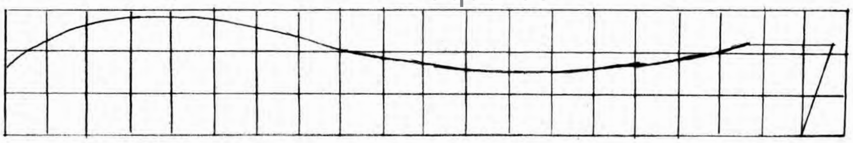




lower supports at the same time, so they match.

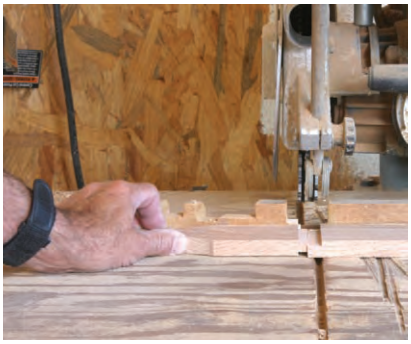
Set a combination square to mark the distance from the sides as well as the ends of the mortises. Once the mortises were rough cut on the drill press, they were trimmed square and smooth using a pair of chisels—a 1-1/4-inch wide chisel for the edges and a 1/4-inch wide chisel for the ends and to clean out the bottoms of the mortises. Counterbore holes for the screws in the ends of the support pieces.

With the slats and upper and lower back supports cut, the next step is to assemble them and this is best done with two people. The slats can be glued in the mortises, but it's best to leave them unglued for better wood movement when the pieces shrink and swell from exposure. Dry-fit the slat tenons in both the upper and lower mortises to make sure everything fits. Then lay the upper and lower back supports on a smooth, flat surface and insert the slat tenons into the mortises. Use clamps to draw the assembly up fairly snug so no joint lines

Clean up the mortises and remove the waste material with an edge chisel the size of the mortise.

Cut the slats to size and then cut their curved shapes.

Sand on a drum or spindle sander.


Cut the tenons on the slats using a table saw and/or tenon cutter, or a dado head on a radial arm saw (as shown here).

Lay out and cut the notches in the back end pieces.

Assemble the back using clamps to hold it together until all pieces are screwed together, including the back braces.

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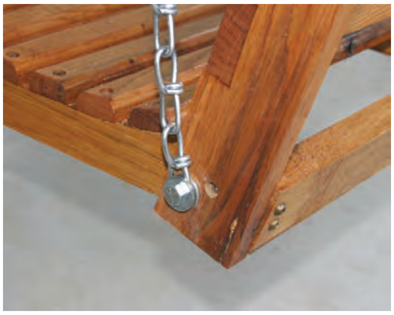
It is easier to finish the individual assemblies rather than the entire swing.

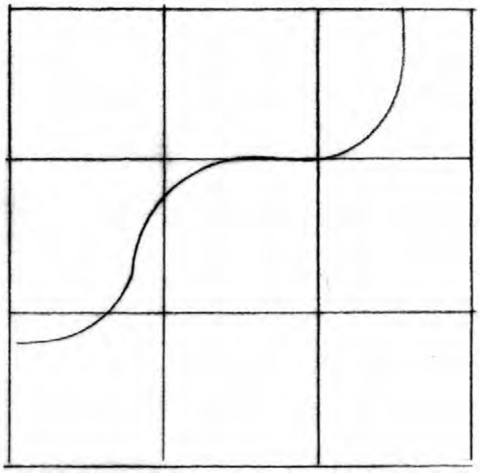


The swing is suspended with a chain held in place with a bolt, washer, chain, washer threaded through the wood, then another washer and lock nut.

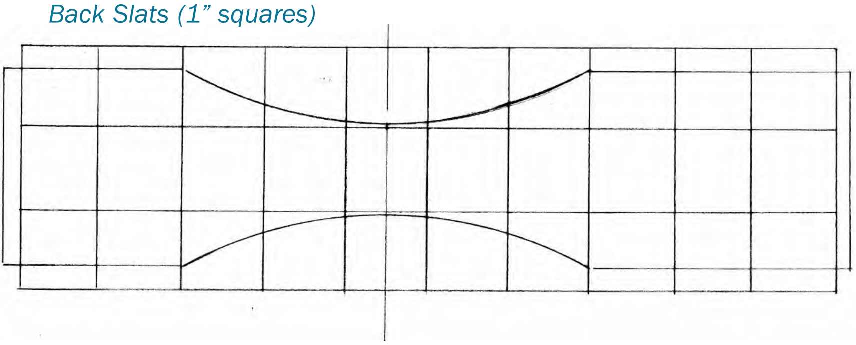
show. Cut the back uprights to size and shape. Then position the back assembly over them and mark for the notch locations. Cut the notches. Reposition the back assembly over the uprights and predrill through the counterbored holes and into the end pieces. Fasten in place with one screw at each joint and then check to make sure the assembly is square. When square, install the remaining screws in the joints. Turn the assembly over and cut and install the back braces. These are fastened to the upper and lower supports to prevent them from separating and allowing the slats to fall out. You may wish to stain or finish the back assembly at this point.

Once both assemblies have dried, counterbore a hole in the bottom end of each back end piece and fasten the back assembly to the seat assembly. Make sure the back is at the correct angle to the seat. Cut the front uprights to size. Counterbore and predrill the bottom of the front uprights, then anchor in place to the seat sides, making sure they are square with the bottom of the seat supports.

Front Arm Support (1" squares)



Back Slats (1" squares)



ARM ASSEMBLY

Next, cut the arms to the correct size and shape. Bore the holes through the arms for the support chains. Thoroughly sand all contours. Cut the front arm angle supports to size and shape and counterbore and predrill for all screw holes. Install the arm angle supports on the outside of the front uprights and flush with their top edges. Counterbore and predrill the screw holes at the back of the arms. Then install the arms down on the arm supports, anchoring with screws from the underside of the angled arm supports and into the underside of the arms. Anchor the back of the arms to the back uprights with counterbored, predrilled screws. Incidentally, you may wish to dry-fit these arm pieces, stain or finish and then install.

HANG IT UP

The swing shown is hung from a single chain joining two separate chain pieces on each end with a screw-together chain link. The first chain is anchored to the front of the seat with a bolt through the front upright and seat support. Washers and a locking nut complete the assembly. The second chain piece runs from the back upright and seat support and is attached to the front chain 12 inches up.

It's also important to make sure the porch swing is suspended by sturdy supports. If the porch ceiling is supported by 2-by-4's you should add more strengthening with blocks on each side of the support beam. The swing can be hung from heavy-duty screw eyes, but an eyebolt is the safest and best choice.

Now it's time to sit back and enjoy your favorite summertime beverage as you gently swing your troubles away. **EHT**

Cut and assemble the arms. Note the arms must have an angled notch cut in their back ends to meet the angle of the back.

Rear braces keep the back from spreading apart.

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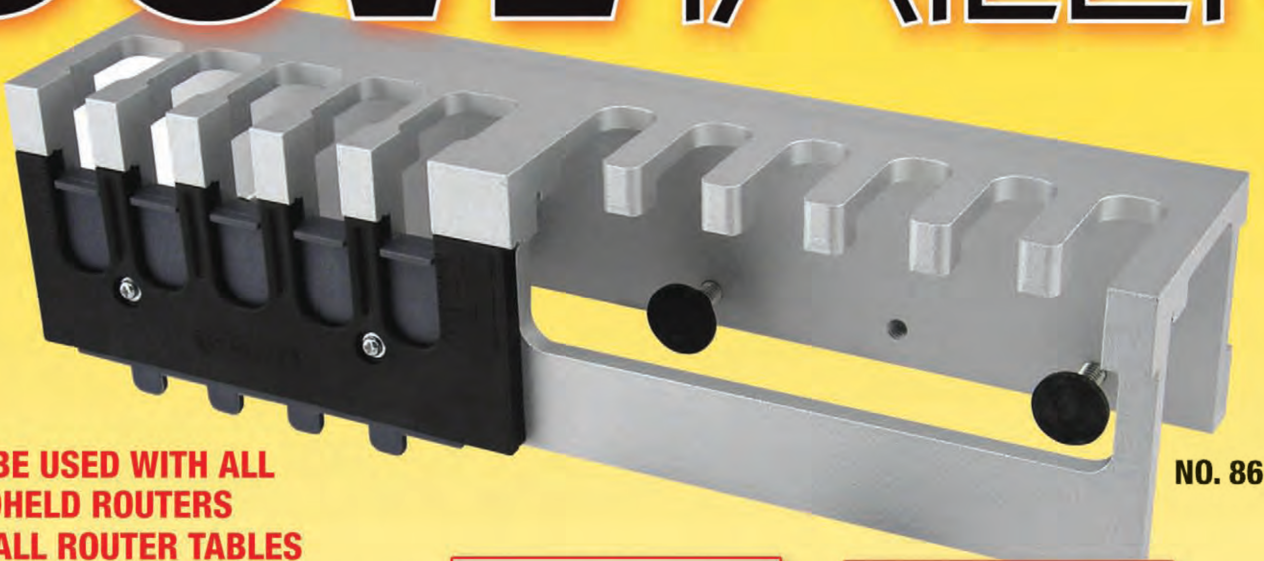

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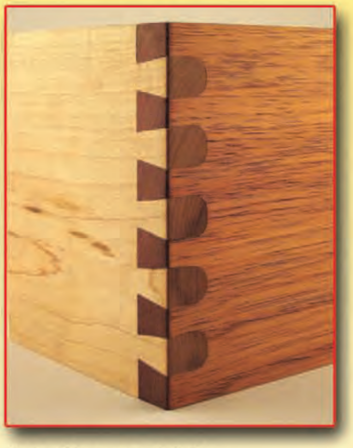

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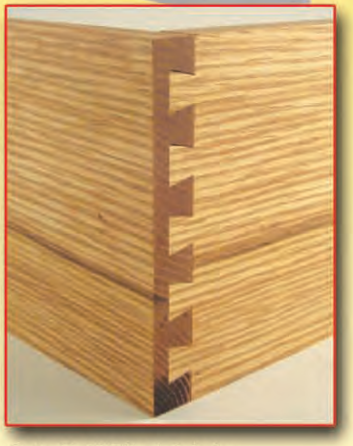

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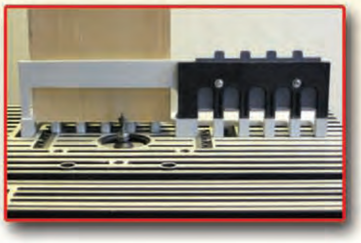

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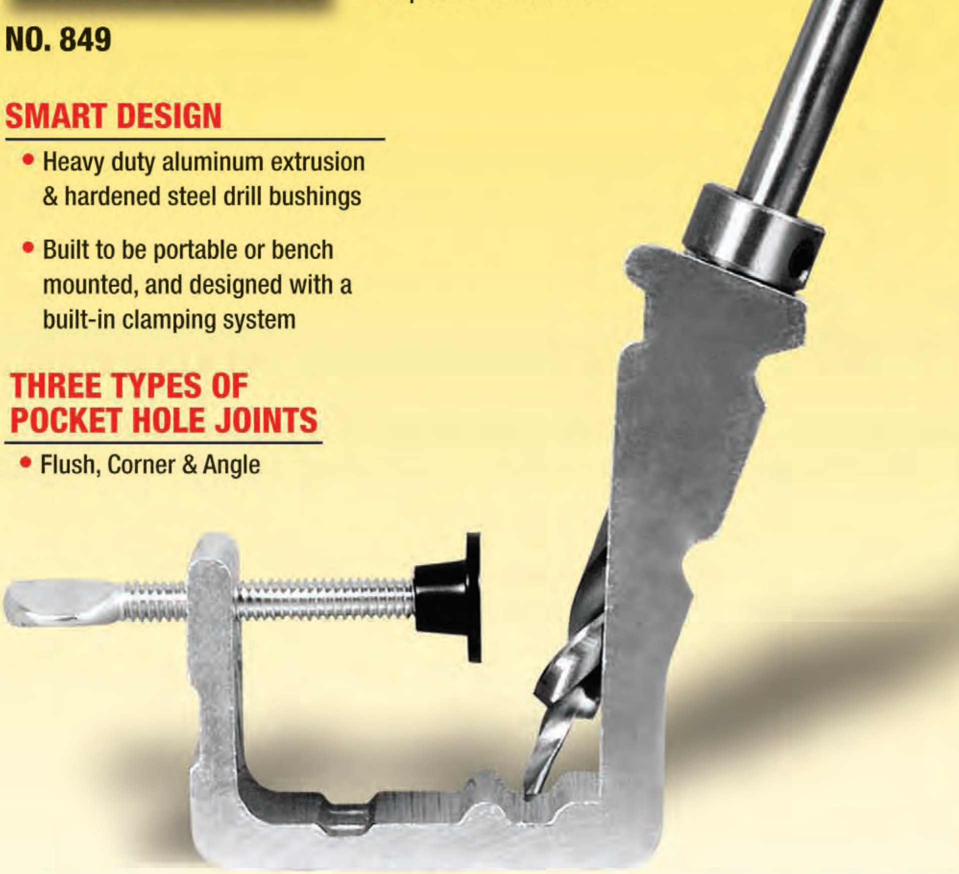

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Low Deck Low

BY LARRY WALTON. PHOTOS BY BRUCE W. SMITH

How to build a deck over an existing patio slab with low clearance.

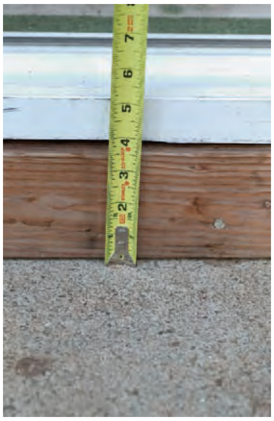
Hey, some of you have been ignoring our great deck how-tos because you think you can't build a deck over your patio slab. Check this out: My uncle kept bugging me about building a deck in his backyard. I tried to explain to my uncle that he didn't have enough elevation at the door to build a deck over his patio. Even if we removed the austere concrete slab, the patio door threshold was barely above grade. But because of his persistence his patio area took on a remarkable transformation, and we came up with a solution that can be a benefit to many who would love to have a deck in place of their concrete patio slab. Here's how:

Determine the joist height for the system. To get the height of the joists, subtract the thickness of the decking from the distance between the top of the slab and the bottom of the patio door threshold.

Before

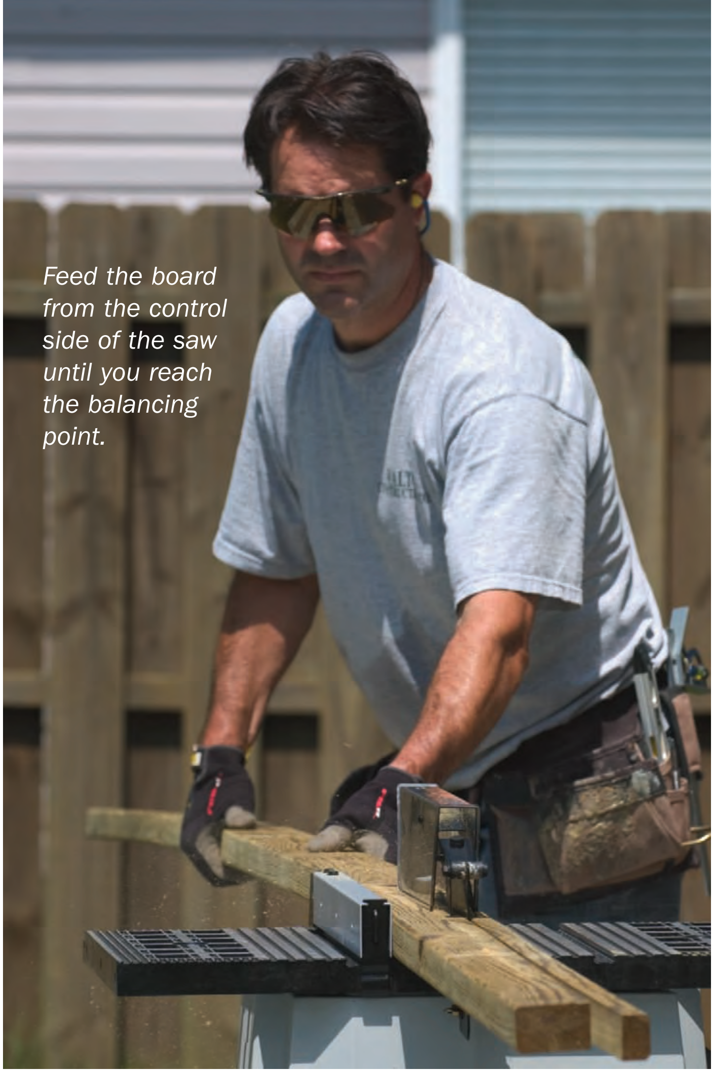
Down

Low Deck
Low Down



Measure from the existing patio to the threshold or bottom of the door frame. Allow for the thickness of the decking material.

Sight down the board to determine crown. Turn the board so that the convex edge is against the fence.



Feed the board from the control side of the saw until you reach the balancing point.

In our case this was 2-1/2 inches. You will probably need a minimum of 1-1/2 inches to do this project. Anything greater than that is a bonus.

If your tolerances are very tight, you can gain another 1/2 inch of room by going with one of the synthetic decking types that measure only 1 inch in thickness.

After determining the joist height, rip all of the needed pressure-treated joist material the same size. With some of the off-fall (extra material from the rips), rip strips of 3/4, 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 inch and cross-cut these pieces into 4- to 8-inch pieces. These pieces are now flat shim stock to be used later.

INSTALL THE JOISTS

Lay the joists across the concrete perpendicular to the house wall at 16 inches on center. Level the joists using the shim stock. Make sure to support the joists with shims every 12 inches because the ripped-down material has diminished structural strength and cannot span much distance.

Keep the board against the fence for a uniform cut.

DETERMINE HOW MUCH DECKING TO BUY

Most lumber yards and home-improvement stores have people and print-outs that can help you determine how much decking you need to buy for your particular application.

Calculate the square footage for one board of the type you want to use. Most common is the 2-by-6. Remember, the nominal (actual) width of a 2-by-6 is 5-1/2 inches making it 0.458 foot. A 16-foot board is 7.328 Square feet. A 12-by-16-foot deck is 192 square feet. Divide the square footage of the deck by the square footage of one board to get the number of boards needed. In our example, 192/7.328= 26.2 or round up to 27 boards.

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Low Deck
Low Down

Anchor the joists to the concrete every 4 feet or so. This is mainly to keep the joists running parallel during installation of the decking. There are a number of ways to anchor into the concrete. For example, you can drill into the concrete with a masonry bit and drive in achors or use expanding anchor bolts.

However, if you want to do something that's quick and have the neighbors wonder what the heck is going on—use our method (Remington Tools' powder-actuated Powerhammer)—ah, the sweet smell of gun smoke!

Attach the shim stock to the joists using construction adhesive or toe-nailing.

If you are extending your deck beyond the size of the existing slab, lay out any pier blocks needed to correspond to the joist layout.

No, you can't put the blocks right on top of the grass—what the heck were you thinking? Use a shovel to cut the sod around the outside edge of each pier block. Dig out any sod and dig down so the tops of the pier blocks are about level with the top of the slab. This provides room for the joist extensions and sets the blocks on solid ground.

Because the slab is sloped to carry water away from the house. As the joists reach the edge of the slab there will be more and more space between their bottom edges and the concrete. This provides room to make the transition off the slab and into a standard deck support system.

Bridge from the concrete slab

Pull the board through during the second half of the cut. Rip the extra stock into strips of various thickness. Strips of 3/4, 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 inch should be adequate to level the joists.

DETERMINE HOW MANY JOISTS TO BUY

Plan a layout for the joists. We decided on the decking manufacturer's recommendation of 16 inches on center. To get the number of joists, divide the length of the decking in inches by 16. Then add one. Your particular design may also require an additional board or two for rim joists (one board that caps off the end of the joists) or ledger boards (attached to the house for joist hangers).

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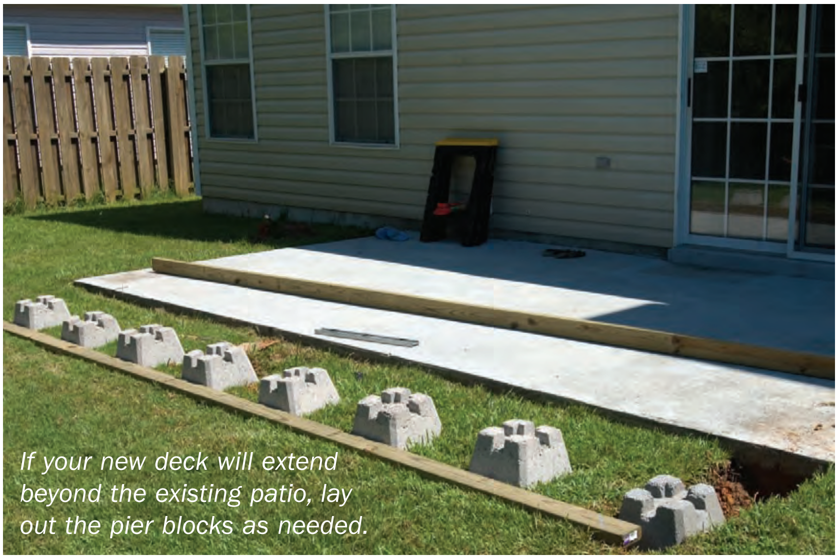
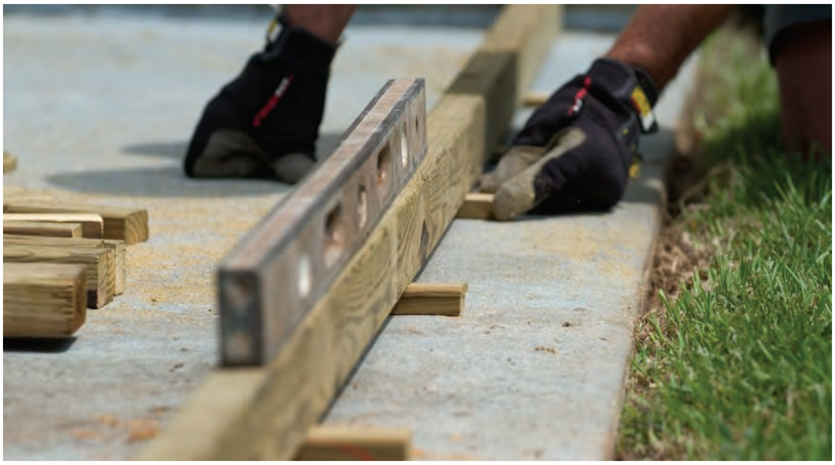
to the first pier block with a pressure-treated joist board of standard width—the joist extension board. Make sure the adjacent ripped joist is level. Trace along the top of the ripped joist and cut the joist extension along this line. The goal here is to remove any material that is above the joist system.

Put the joist extension back into position, bridging between the slab



If your new deck will extend beyond the existing patio, lay out the pier blocks as needed.

Chop (cross-cut) shims into lengths of about 4 inches.



Place the joists on layout and level with the flat shims.

RIPPING LONG JOIST BOARDS

Always wear protective safety equipment, including safety glasses and ear protection.

Long boards can be ripped on a small portable table saw without rollers or feed supports. In fact, sometimes rollers can be counter-productive because they may track the board off line as it goes through the saw. Room to maneuver is needed both up and down and side to side, because the material you are ripping may not be straight.

Make sure there are no obstructions on either side of the saw for a few feet longer than the board you will be ripping.

Sight down the board to determine the crown or curve. The convex edge of the board should go against the fence. This keeps the concave side from bridging across the fence causing an under-sized rip. It also reduces blade binding that can occur as fibers are cut and the pressures change.

Grab the board at a good balance point near the middle and start with the edge against the fence. The important thing is to keep the portion of material that is currently on the table parallel to and against the fence. Pay attention to the edge of the board against the fence and not to the blade.

As you push the board through, begin anticipating when the board will be balanced on the saw table. Leaving the saw motor on, walk around the table and grab both the ripped board and the off fall. Hold both pieces in such a way that you do not close the kerf and pinch the blade.

Begin pulling the board to continue the cut, again keeping the edge of the board against the fence on the feed side of the table, especially at the point closest to the cutting point of the blade.

You may need to move the off-feed end of the board off line to keep the board properly on the fence as you finish your rip.

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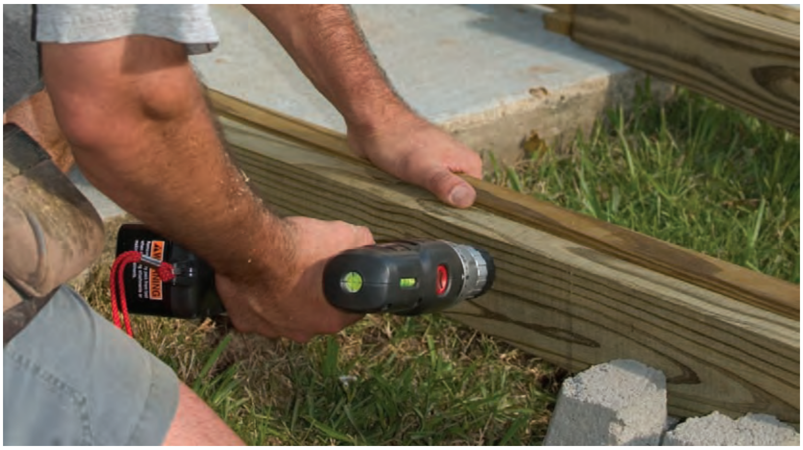
and the pier block. Anchor the ripped joist to the joist extension with decking screws. Repeat this process for each joist. Note: Each joist extension should be marked and cut independently because the tops of the pier blocks will vary in elevation.

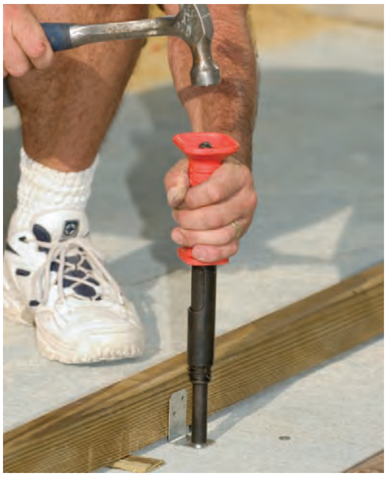
DECKING

Now you are ready to deck over the low-deck joist system as you would on any deck. Layout the deck boards perpendicular to the joists. For synthetic decking, use a 16d nail to space the boards apart.

For this low deck application you will probably not be able to use a hidden deck fastening system because there isn't adequate room. Use screws specifically designed for the type of decking you are using. Take care to space screws uniformly and align them with the screws on the adjacent boards. EHT



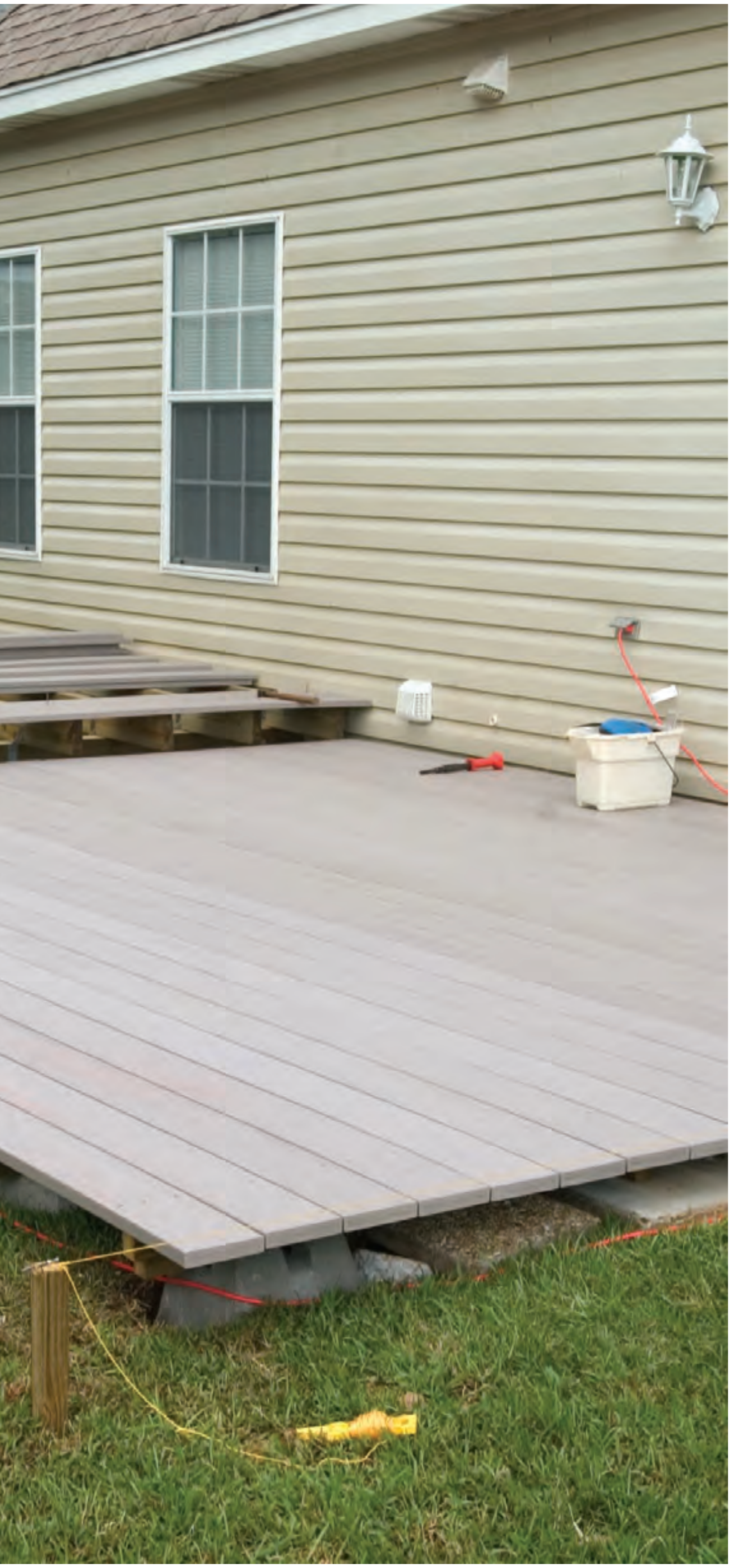
Bridge from the slab to the pier blocks with a wider joist board.



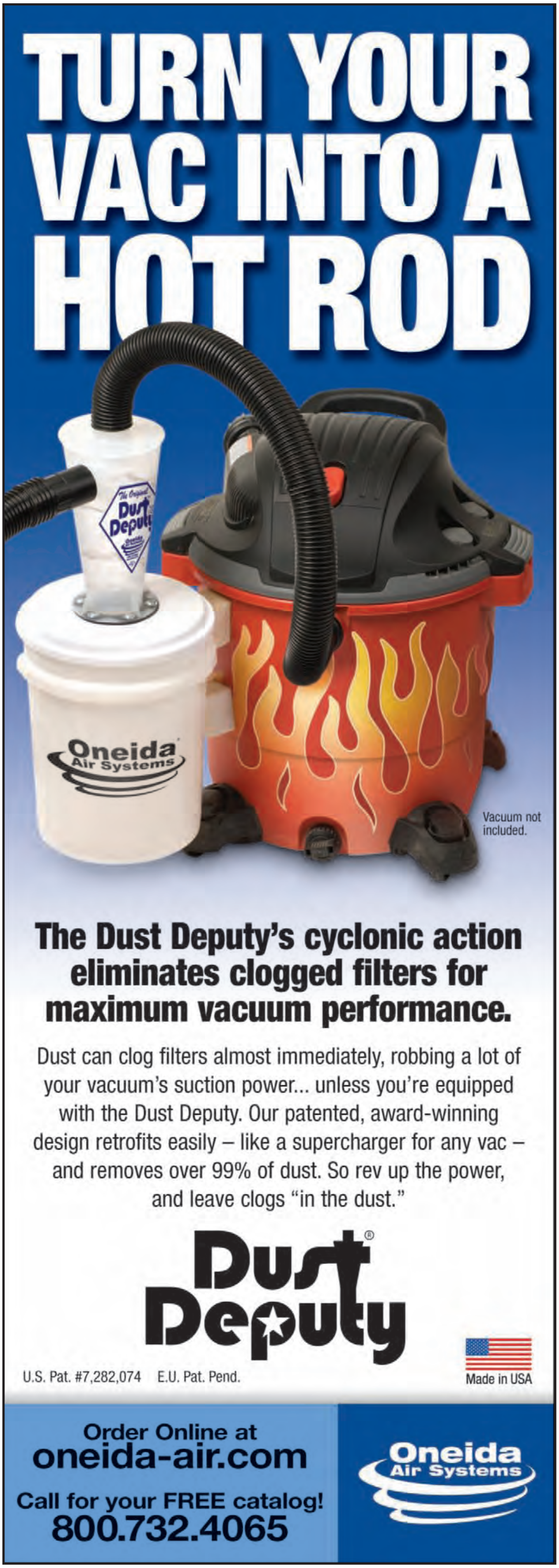
One of the quickest ways to attach to concrete is with this Remington Tools Powerhammer. Use eye and ear protection and keep the joist between you and the tool.

COMPOSITE DECKING

For a sharp-looking deck with low maintenance requirements, composite decking comes in a variety of textures and colors that can be mixed to create stunning and unique deck patterns. Unlike traditional wooden decking, composite deck boards do not need staining, painting or sealing to maintain their natural beauty. The deep wood-grain texture has the appearance and texture of wood, and the material is manufactured to endure the most severe weather conditions.



With the low-deck joist system in place, you can use standard decking techniques to complete the job. Use a nail to space the decking boards and fasten with the appropriate length screws.



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DEC

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Decking Dos and Don’ts for DIY’ers

Decks are built for summertime, and now that the days are long and the sun is shining, *EHT* offers an overview of some critical construction techniques to make sure your next backyard project stands strong and steady.

CODE COMPLIANCE

With a little research you’ll find a variety of methods to construct a deck, but deck construction must always conform to local building codes. Deck construction may also require a building permit. In general, building codes are developed by industry associations to provide minimum safety standards for a home’s occupants, the environment and the public at large. Building codes are adopted and enforced by local government officials and vary based on local political issues, environmental regulations, etc. However, building codes are “not intended to preclude the use of other construction methods or materials. All construction and materials must be approved by the authority having jurisdiction” (2009 International Residential Code). In other words, if the local building official determines your method of construction meets or exceeds the safety and soundness of what is prescribed by the building code, then you’ll get the green light to start building. Check with your local building inspector to determine all local requirements and to clear up any questions you may have about the deck’s design.

DECK LAYOUT

Establishing the layout of the deck simply involves outlining the size and shape of the deck using string and wood stakes. This step determines where you locate the concrete piers and support posts. It may help to string off the perimeter of the deck, and then line up a second set of stakes and string inside the perimeter to mark off your support posts. Measure the diagonals of your layout against the house wall to check for square. Move the stakes as necessary until the outline is completely square.

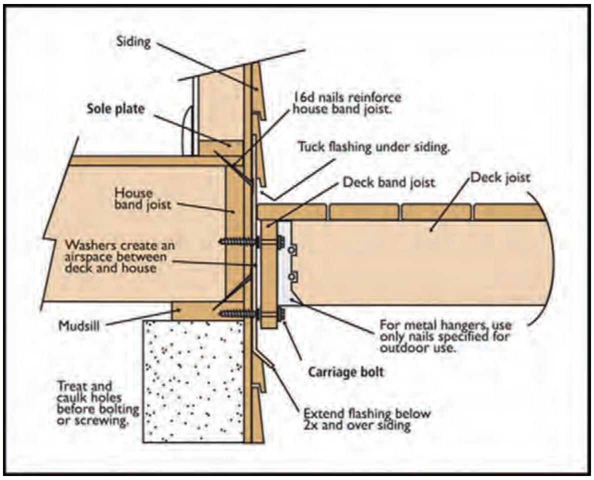
To prevent weeds and unwanted foliage from growing up—and possibly through—the decking, spread a sheet of plastic film over the area. Cut the sheeting to wrap around posts and to allow drainage for rainwater. After the framing is complete you can weigh down the plastic with gravel or stones.

INSTALLING THE LEDGER BOARD

Decks that are attached to a house require a ledger board to make the connection. The lumber for the ledger and all framing members must be pressure-treated for exterior use. The ledger will establish the height of your deck. This is an absolutely critical connection and must be installed properly to ensure the strength and safety of the deck. Your ledger board and the deck's joists will support the weight of the deck, so use 2-by-8's or 2-by-10's depending on the size of the deck you plan to build. Some siding may need to be removed to install the board. The ledger is often bolted directly to the house band joist with a waterproof connection and an air space that prevents moisture buildup. Make sure the ledger is level and attach it by using 1/2-inch diameter lag screws with washers beneath the screw heads. You can create the air space (for drainage) by using washers between the ledger and the house. Through-bolts, nuts and washers are also acceptable fasteners. All hardware and fasteners should be hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel. When fastening the ledger, drill 1/4-inch pilot holes for the screws spaced every 2 feet. (Some lag screws, such as the RSS line from GRK Fasteners, are self-drilling.) Use a 1-inch spade bit to countersink the screws, which creates a flush surface on which to connect the deck joists.

If you are attaching the ledger to a poured concrete foundation, use expansion bolts. For connection to a block foundation, fill the

Lay out the deck area with stakes and string, and lay down plastic sheeting to prevent weeds and unwanted vegetation from growing beneath the deck.


Siding
Sole plate
16d nails reinforce house band joist.
Tuck flashing under siding.
Deck band joist
Deck joist
House band joist
Washers create an airspace between deck and house
Mudsill
For metal hangers, use only nails specified for outdoor use.
Carriage bolt
Treat and caulk holes before bolting or screwing.
Extend flashing below 2x and over siding

If possible, the deck should be bolted directly to the house with a waterproof connection and an air space that prevents moisture buildup. (Image courtesy Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association, cypressinfo.org.)

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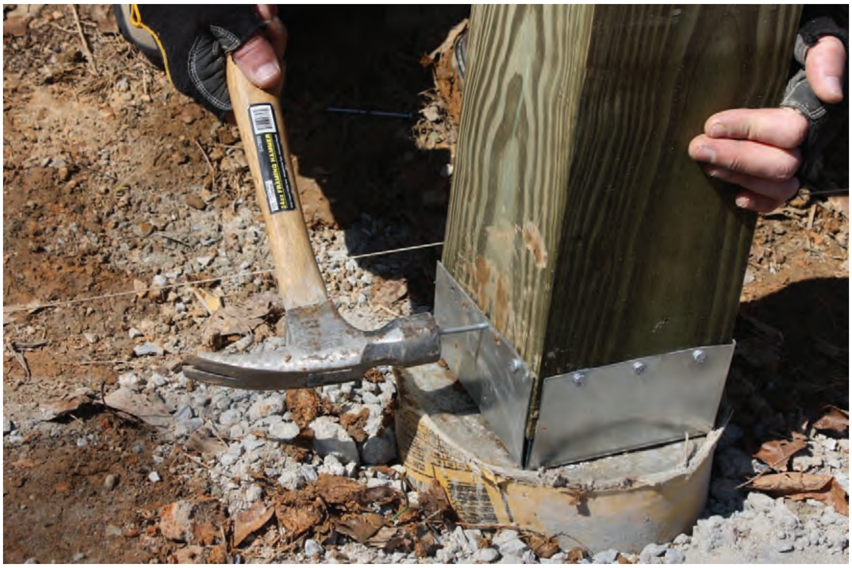


The galvanized post anchors from Simpson Strong-Tie elevate the bottom of the post about an inch off the surface of the footing to keep it away from standing water (www.strongtie.com).

block cells with concrete or grout and use a rubber mallet to drive lead masonry anchors for 3/8-inch lag screws into predrilled holes. Secure the fasteners with epoxy.

Seal the heads of the ledger screws with silicone caulk. The ledger connection should also be protected with flashing to prevent water intrusion. This is a critical step; the flashing will help prevent water from collecting behind the ledger and leading to rot. And the rot could, in turn, possibly lead to the deck collapsing when the screws pull away from the rotted wood. Check local codes for specific flashing instructions. Generally speaking, you want to tuck the flashing behind the siding to consistently divert runoff away from the house and ledger connection.

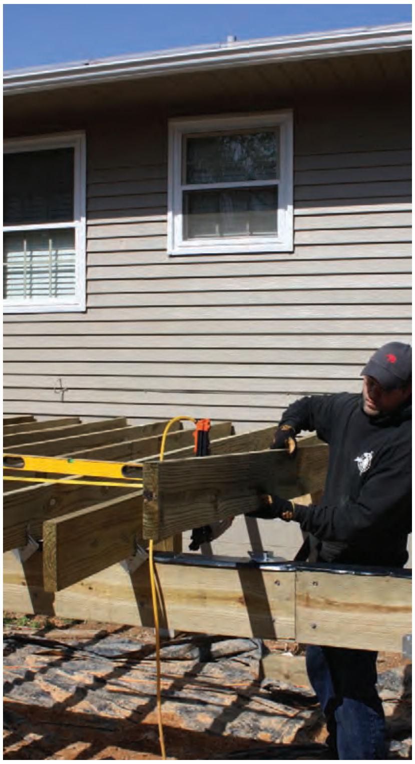
SUPPORT FRAMING

Current code guidelines generally specify that deck posts should be 6-by-6 treated lumber—and specified for ground contact—instead of 4-by-4's. Deck posts can be supported by concrete pier footings or buried below the frost line and set in concrete. One of the newest and smartest methods of fastening a post is to use the galvanized post anchors from Simpson Strong-Tie that elevate the bottom of the post about an inch off the surface of the footing to keep it away from standing water.

If the deck joists are supported by a beam, the beam should be connected to the support posts with the appropriate metal brackets, or notched into a 6-by-6 post and fastened with lag screws. It is not acceptable for joists or beams to only straddle the sides of the posts with through-bolts. The beam is constructed from two straight boards of the same dimensions—usually 2-by-8 or larger—that are nailed and glued flush and face-to-face to create a single 4-by. Build the beam with lag screws or 10d nails in a staggered pattern every 12 to 16 inches. Make sure any splices in the beam are located over a support post.

Where deck joists intersect the ledger board, do not toe-nail them. Instead, connect the joists with hot-dipped galvanized joist hangers and joist-hanger nails. Where deck joists cross the top edge of a beam, attach them with galvanized hurricane ties. Use your decking plan to determine joist spacing. Joists spaced 16 inches on center will usually do the trick, but you may need to space them more closely to accommodate some deck-board systems.

To stabilize movement in a deck frame, you have a few options. One is to install a long diagonal 2-by-4 brace to the underside of the joists. Another



Deck joists are often supported by beams built from two large pieces of lumber, 2x8 or larger. The deck joists can be connected to the beam with metal hurricane brackets.

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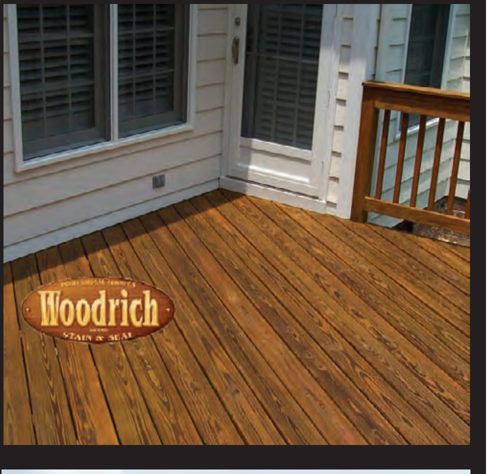

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Tool setups are key to an organized project. Here we use a Bosch sliding miter saw with an outfeed support stand to cut the deck boards to length (www.boschtools.com).

is to install perpendicular blocking between the joists, cut from the same size lumber as the deck joists. Another tried and true method is to install diagonal 2-by-4 braces fastened to the support posts and the adjacent framing members.

DECKING DECISIONS

The decking surface can be made from pressure-treated wood, wood-plastic composite decking, PVC decking, cedar, cypress or exotic hardwoods such as ipe. Even aluminum deck systems are available. Each material has different advantages; some offer the genuine wood grain that you'll only get with a natural product, while other options may offer cool hidden-fastener systems, a prefinished appearance and minimal maintenance requirements. Research your material options carefully, explore the maintenance issues and balance your desire for a certain look with a close eye on your budget—depending on the material, deck boards can vary greatly in cost.

The method of fastening your deck boards will be determined by the product you've chosen. The most popular decking material in North America is still pressure-treated lumber. These deck boards should be installed with the bark side of the wood facing upward to avoiding cupping. We recommend butting treated deck boards together because, as the moisture dries from the wood, the boards will shrink and naturally form gaps that will allow water drainage. (Depending on moisture content, cedar, cypress and especially hardwood decking may require deliberate spacing for consistent joint sizes.)

Note: A popular method of installing treated decking is to lay the boards diagonally over the framing for some extra decorative flair. You'll need to make this decision in advance of framing your deck, because the joists of a diagonal decking system should be spaced no greater than 12 inches on center. Parquet patterns or other more elaborate designs may require even further support, such as additonal blocking or doubled joists.

Notch the deck boards to fit around the rail posts, and run them "wild" over the edge of the deck frame. You can trim them all at once when installation is complete.

A pneumatic framing nailer with ring-shank nails can make quick work of installing a pressure-treated deck.

Predrill the ends of the deck boards before fastening to prevent splitting the wood grain.

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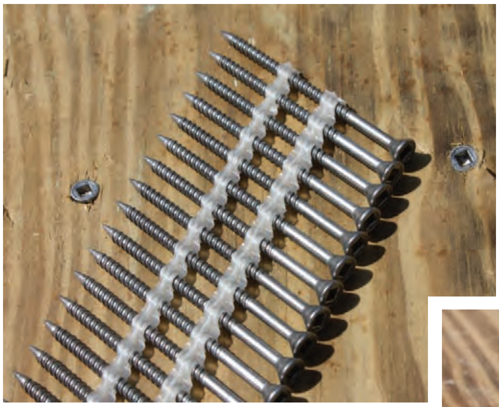
GRACE

Fasteners for wood should be stainless steel, hot-dipped galvanized or otherwise coated for exterior use. If nailing the boards, the *EHT* staff recommends using two ring-shank nails per joist, driven through the decking at an angle toward each other for extra holding power. To prevent wood from splitting, use nails with thin shanks and blunt points. And, always pre-drill the grain at the ends of the boards before fastening to avoid splits.

Screws can also be used to fasten decks. One new item that makes deck installation easier is the Scrail Fastener. Scrail is a cross between a screw and a nail. Use a pneumatic nailer to drive the collated Scrail fasteners with high-production speed. However, if you make a mistake then you can easily back out the threaded fastener with a screwdriver—something you can't do with a ring-shank nail.

For wood decking as well as synthetic options, hidden-fastener systems that install along the edge of the boards are among the hottest new trends in decking. Some synthetic deck boards



Scrail Fasteners from Fasco are a combination of a screw and a nail (www.fasco.com).

You can drive the Scrail Fasteners with a pneumatic framing nailer, and also back them out easily with a screwdriver.

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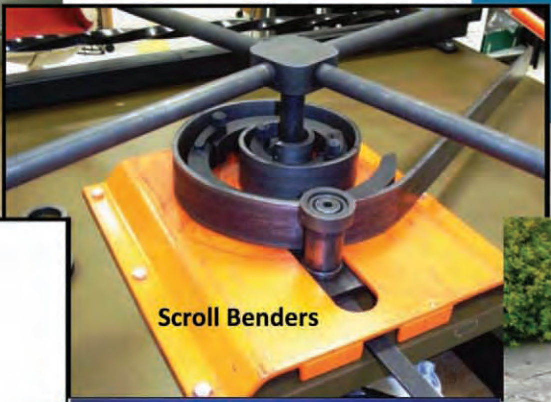
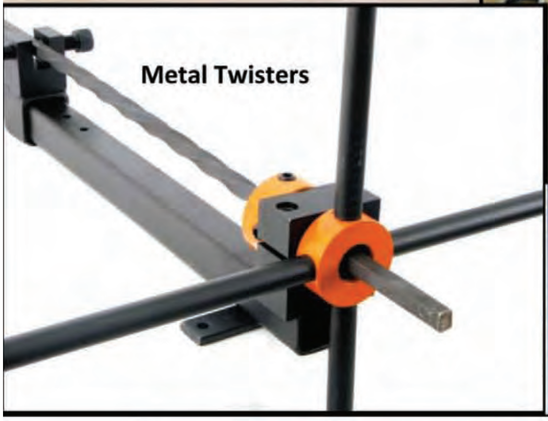

Scroll Benders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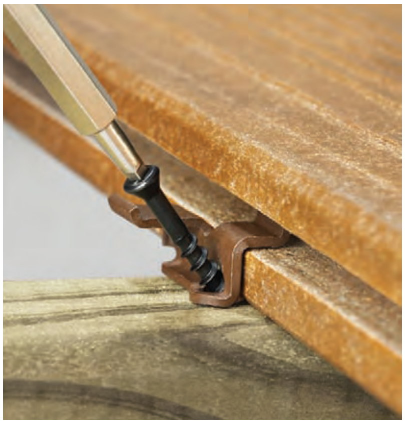
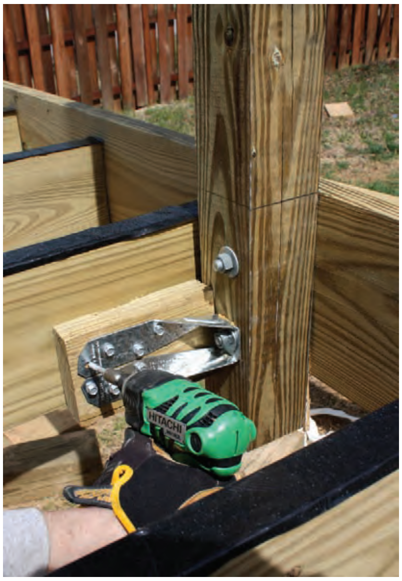
even come with a groove in each edge in which to hook a clip or biscuit, which is screwed to the joist then hidden inside the joint when the next board is installed. Other systems employ a tongue-and-groove design that conceals the deck screws beneath the tongue of the mating board.



Some composite decking manufacturers offer fastener systems that are hidden inside the grooved edges between the deck boards. Shown here is a ConceaLoc hidden fastener from Timbertech (www.timbertech.com).



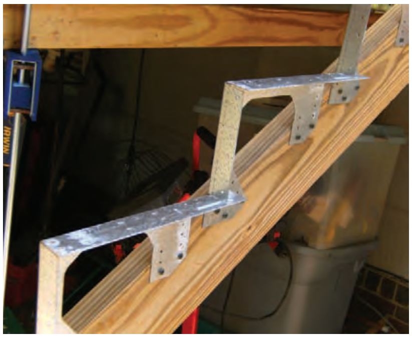
We recommend using metal hardware to strengthen the connection of railing posts to the deck frame.

STAIRS, HANDRAILS AND FINISHING TOUCHES

Stairs on a deck should be connected with galvanized metal hangers specifically designed to attach the stringers to the deck framing. Precut stair stringers, which can spare you a lot of time and labor, are available at most lumber yards and hardware stores.

Also available are metal stair brackets for constructing a staircase with minimal marks and cuts. Rather than using notched stringers, the brackets attach to a pair of solid 2-by-6's using predrilled holes and pre-marked measurements. This creates a mounting surface for the treads and risers, whatever the pitch of the staircase.

Handrail systems pose another place for potential danger if they aren't constructed properly. The posts of the handrail should not be nailed to the side of a deck. Nor should the posts be notched where they connect to the deck. At a minimum, 4-by-4 rail posts should be fastened to rim joists with a pair of 1/2-inch-diamater through bolts and washers. An even better practice is to reinforce the post-to-deck connection with metal hardware, such as that manufactured by Simpson Strong-Tie or Deck-Lok. Install the posts plumb and square. The rails and pickets should be built rigidly with no wobble or sway in the construction. Rail height is usually 36 inches high, and the pickets should be spaced no more than 4 inches apart. A variety of manufacturers offer rail kits for decks that ensure code compliance and a sturdy design.



Metal stair brackets from GoPro Construction make it possible to build a staircase with minimal marks and cuts. (www.goproconstruction.com)

Building a deck gives you the opportunity to add a personal touch, from decorative rail systems to integrated lighting and much more. Shown here are stainless steel balusters and solar post caps from Maine Ornamental (www.deckorators.com).

Building your own deck provides an opportunity to give it a personal stamp. In addition to the wide range of building designs, you can dress it up with a combination of complementary stain or paint colors, add artistic deck-board accents or integrated lighting, even construct planter boxes, benches or inset frames that wrap around trees. Ultimately, the finished look is up to the designer, so if you're designing the deck, have fun with it. **EHT**

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A sought-after surface material for the discerning deck owner is Ipe. Ipe is an extremely dense, tight-grained wood that is eight times harder than California Redwood. Ipe has exceptional resistance to termite and decay, generally available in a deep, rich brown with some pieces displaying amber and red hues, and with little or no knots. Ipe is also fire-rated to NFPA Code, Class A UBC Code Class 1. Ipe is considered a high-end building material, so expect to pay more than for other decking products, but Bristol Valley Hardwoods is an online supplier that works hard to keep pricing low for the homeowner. Bristol Valley sells only 1st grade Ipe, perfect for decks, porches, docks, furniture, fencing and more. The company's turnaround from the time an order is placed to the shipping is generally within five business days. Bristol Valley Hardwoods warehouses Ipe decking and have developed a strong working relationship with several brokers in order to have plenty of quality product on hand in a dry, protected environment. For more information, visit www.bristolvalley.com.

NEW COLORS IN GENOVA DECKING

Genovations Decking is manufactured from solid—not cellular—PVC, which installs with a tongue-and-groove design for a comfortable, fastener-free but slip-resistant deck surface. The decking will never fade, stain, scratch or mold, offering a lifetime of durable performance. The decking features a low-gloss surface that mimics natural wood grain in four solid earth tone shades and three new variegated colors (Chestnut, Walnut and Sandstone), which incorporate the authentic color variations of natural wood into every board without sacrificing performance. Also available is PVC railing, providing an aesthetically complete surface and railing system. The railing system features aluminum channels that support the top and bottom rails with die-cast metal brackets, providing superior strength and eliminating the need for extra support brackets. Learn more at www.genovaproducts.com.

EASYFLEX POLE UMBRELLA

The easyFlex pole umbrella comes with everything in the box that's needed to install on a base or concrete patio. Its flexible arm tilts to ensure sun protection all day long. And, because it features no center pole, homeowners get full use of their outdoor space. When not in use, the easyFlex pole umbrella folds away to save space and is also removable for winter storage. Umbrella diameter is 8 feet, 2-1/2 inches when open, and the maximum arm reach is 6 feet, 11 inches. Pole height is 6 feet, 11 inches. Learn more at www.shademadeeasy.com.

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HOT PRODUCTS

TIMBERTECH RUSTICBARK

TimberTech adds the new RusticBark style to its XLM decking line. XLM is an expanded polymer decking material that features a solid cap surface to reinforce its structural integrity. RusticBark has a rich brown appearance with reddish undertones and subtle black variations that produce a stain-washed appearance for an understated tropical hardwood look. XLM decking is available in grooved or non-grooved planks. Grooved planks are designed to work with TimberTech's ConceaLoc system, a stainless steel hidden fastener that provides quick installation and consistent gapping while enabling a fastener-free surface. XLM provides superior scratch, stain and mildew resistance for an enjoyable deck that requires little maintenance.

LATITUDES DECK STONES

Latitudes Deck Stones present a cool new wrinkle in outdoor building products. A unique complement to composite decking, Latitudes Deck Stones allow builders and designers to add creativity and a custom appearance. Deck Stones are a stylish deck add-on and a perfect alternative for composite decking when deck surface transitions are desired. Deck Stones can be used in virtually any area on the deck and are well suited for outdoor kitchens, grilling areas and raised fire pits. They can be installed on new or existing conventional wood-framed decks and can support typical building loads. The high-strength fiberglass substrate frame attaches easily to joists on 16-inch centers with hidden fasteners. Available in durable 16-inch-square Smoke natural slate or Riverstone granite tiles, Deck Stones are interlocking and self-draining and do not require mortar. Learn more at www.latitudesdeck.com.

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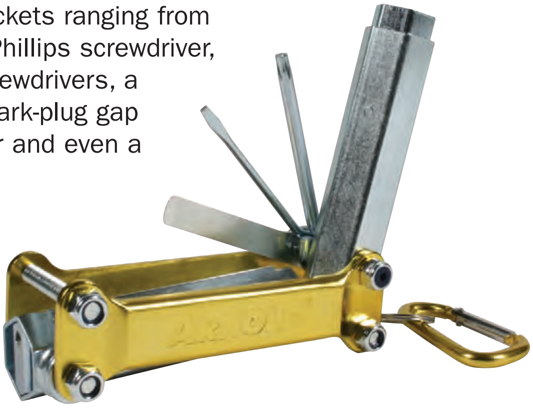
THE GADGET MULTI-TOOL

The new 11-in-1 multi-tool from Arnold is dubbed The Gadget, designed to help everyone from homeowners to landscape professionals perform on-the-fly power equipment maintenance. Configured like a folding knife, the Gadget provides several tools in one to eliminate large investments in multiple tools. The Gadget includes four sockets ranging from 1/2 to 13/16 inch, a large Phillips screwdriver, small and large standard screwdrivers, a T27 Torx driver, a tapered spark-plug gap gauge, a chainsaw file holder and even a bottle opener. Learn more at www.arnoldproducts.com.



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HOT PRODUCTS

FASTTRACK PORCH SCREENING SYSTEM

FASTtrack is a new porch screening system that gives builders and DIY'ers the ability to create porch structure elements for fast and easy installation as well as limitless project creativity. FASTtrack uses a two-piece system of 1-by-2-inch self-mating channels and molded clips. The powder-coated channels are available in white or bronze, in 8-, 10- or 12-foot lengths, and "snap" over the clips to conceal them. This creates a clean, elegant look, while allowing for different configurations including a railing system, vertical mill posts and horizontal rails. FASTtrack allows users to screen from the interior or exterior of the porch using flat spline in less time than traditional porch systems. Learn more at www.screentight.com.

THE ORIGINAL GRILL PAD

Outdoor cooking entails spills, stains and sparks—any or all of which can cause damage to expensive patios, porches or decks. Now there's a very simple, inexpensive way to protect those areas. The "Original" Grill Pad is a lightweight, flexible cement fiber pad that comes in three shapes (round, oval and rectangle) and five designer colors so there's one that's right for any grill, chiminea or portable fire pit. Easily cleaned with a garden hose, the pad will outlast virtually any grill. Those patio and deck surfaces that can cost thousands of dollars can be kept cleaner and last longer for a cost as low as $25 to $40. For more information, visit www.grillpad.com.

UNDERDECK

UnderDeck creates an outdoor living space using the overlooked area below your deck. UnderDeck attaches to the underside of elevated decks turning the area below into a clean, dry and bright space. The UnderDeck system has a wide range of applications, such as creating patio space, screened enclosures, storage areas and more. UnderDeck accommodates joist spacing from 3 to 24 inches on-center and is available in 10-, 12-, 14-, and 16-foot lengths. Using a simple, DIY-friendly installation process, the system converts unused space into an outdoor retreat for a fraction of the cost of major remodeling. Learn more at www.underdeck.com

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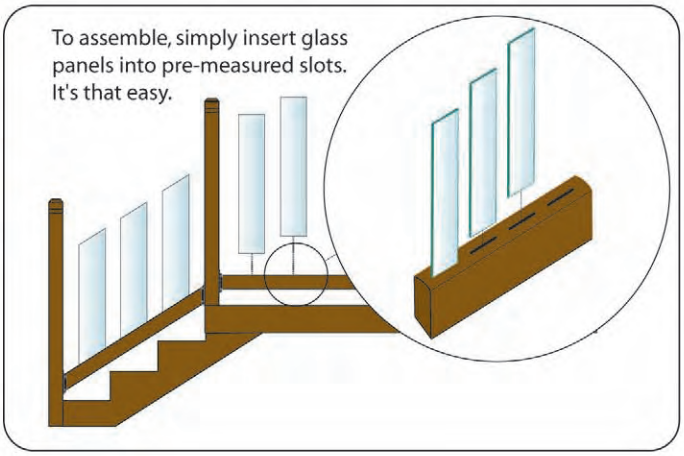

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